PRIVATE EYE

No. 1158
12 May –
25 May 2006
£1.40

BLAIR RESHUFFLE SHOCK

EXHILARATION. CONSIDERATION.

THE GS 450h. THE WORLD'S FIRST HIGH PERFORMANCE HYBRID

For more information, call 0845 601 9988 or visit www.lexus.co.uk/GSHybrid

BBC TOP GEAR MAGAZINE

Top Manufacturer for Quality, Reliability and Customer Care in the UK. BBC Top Gear Magazine Motoring Survey 2002 to 2005.

AUTO EXPRESS DRIVER POWER 2006 BEST MANUFACTURER: LEXUS

Auto Express Driver Power Survey Lexus Best Manufacturer 2002 to 2006.

Model shown GS 450h SE with metallic paint £44,470 OTR. GS range prices start from £30,805 to £47,710 OTR. Prices correct at time of going to press and include VAT, delivery charges, number plates, full tank of fuel, one year's road fund licence and first registration fee. BBC Top Gear Magazine Motoring Sur

GS 450h fuel economy figures: extra-urban 7.2L/100km (39.2 mpg), urban 9.2L/100km (30.7mpg), combined 7.9L/100km (35.8mpg). CO_2 emissions 186g/k

The Lexus hybrid GS 450h

Step into the new GS 450h and sense a feeling of tranquillity. Put your foot down and experience smooth, seamless acceleration thanks to a combination of a V6 petrol engine and a powerful electric motor that provides exhilarating V8-like performance. At the same time CO_2 emissions and fuel consumption are kept to a category beating low. The new Lexus GS 450h. More car. More care.

LEXUS

The pursuit of perfection

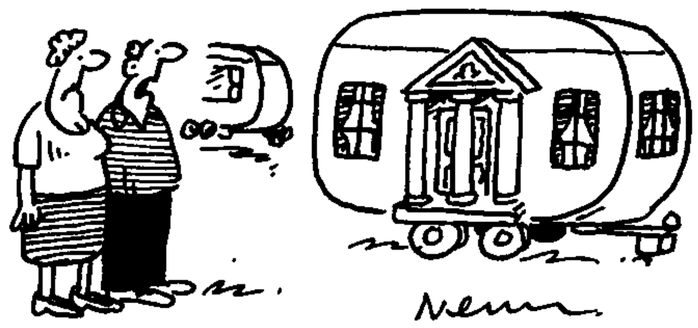
05 based on the results of questionnaires from over 52,000 motorists spanning 142 models from 37 manufacturers. Auto Express Driver Power Survey 2006 based on the results of questionnaires from 46,759 motorists. Calls to Lexus will be charged at local rate and may be monitored and recorded.

The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the 1.9 dCi 120hp are: Urban 31.7 (8.9), Extra Urban 47.1 (6.0), Combined 40.4 (7.0).
The official CO_2 emission figure is 183g/km.

Price includes delivery to dealer, number plates, 17.5% VAT, 12 months' Government road fund licence and £38 first registration fee. Finance is subject to status and you must be at least 18 and a UK resident (excluding the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) to apply for finance. Finance provided by RFS Ltd., Charterhall House, Charterhall Drive, Chester CH88 3AN. All figures correct at time of going to press. This offer applies to vehicles ordered and registered by 30th June 2006 and is available to private and small business customers at participating dealers only. Car shown with optional all round metallic paint (includes body coloured bumpers and side mouldings) an extra £500. *EBD = Electronic Brake Distribution. RENAULT RECOMMEND elf

Temple of Doom

- **Chipolata Man has his sausage pricked** 7
- **Muckspreader on Beckett's balls-up:** 9
- ***Londonstani*? Don't understani... Books** 26
- **Norfolk's PFI turkey; Look, no WMD; Satanic Panic & more: In the Back** 27-29
- **Slicker on Lord Coe & Co** 30, 31



"It's Margaret Beckett's grace-and-favour caravan"

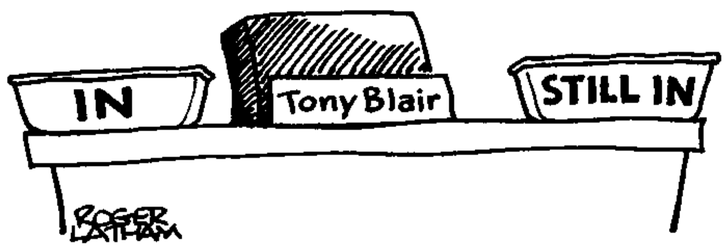
NEAL LAWSON, director of the Labour pressure group Compass, may have been behind last weekend's round robin letter concerning the Labour succession, but he denies he is leading some sort of Brownite plot.

"Despite the fact that I worked for Gordon, it was when I was in short trousers," he told the *Times* on Monday. "There is no hotline to Gordon Brown."

It seems Lawson has forgotten what he told undercover hack Greg Palast during the *Observer*'s "lobbygate" investigation a few years ago. Posing as an American businessman, Palast asked what he could expect if he paid Lawson's lobbying firm LLM a large monthly retainer. Trumping a rival outfit which had offered tea with Geoffrey Robinson, Lawson promised: "We can reach anyone. We can go to Gordon Brown if we have to."

A WEEK before his promotion to Home Secretary, John Reid was striking a heroic pose in his constituency by leading protesters who handed over a 50,000-signature petition against the closure of the A&E unit at Monklands hospital, Airdrie.

Reid took a rather different view of protests against NHS cuts when he was Health Secretary. In May 2004 he received a 10,000-signature petition in defence of threatened maternity units at Devizes and Malmesbury – only to send it straight back, refusing to get involved. A year later, while he was visiting Gloucestershire royal hospital, campaigners handed him a 2,000-signature petition on behalf of a children's ward in Cheltenham. The petitioners never heard from him – and a few weeks later their petition was found dumped in a skip!



Free Private Eye mug for new subscribers – see page 35

EDITORIAL
6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN.
Tel: 020 7437 4017. Fax: 020 7437 0705.
Email: strobes@private-eye.co.uk
http://www.private-eye.co.uk

PRIVATE EYE SUBSCRIPTIONS/SALES
PO Box 326, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8FA.
Subscription enquiries: 0870 750 1714 or 01795 414 871
Overseas: +44 (0) 1795 414 870 Fax: 01795 414 555.
Books: 0870 750 1712 **Web:** www.private-eye.co.uk
Email: private-eye@galleon.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
£24 per annum. Europe and Eire £32. Airmail (rest of world) £38. Cheques/POs to Private Eye. Mastercard/Visa.

ADVERTISING
Display: 020 7878 2303 Classified: 020 7240 9129

Published by Pressdram Ltd, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. **Printed** by BGP Ltd, Bicester OX6 7QZ . **Distributed** by P.E. Distributions, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. 020 7437 4017.

ABC

WHAT really tickles John Prescott's libido? Consider the evidence.

The TV journalist Linda McDougall first met him in 1978, when she and her husband Austin Mitchell MP were hosting a memorial event to honour the recently deceased Foreign Secretary Anthony Crosland. "I opened the door to Prescott and showed him in," she tells the *Sunday Times*. "As he came through the door, he pushed me quite forcefully against the wall and put his hand up my skirt."

On 10 October 2003 Tracey Temple accompanied him to St Paul's cathedral for the solemn memorial service to the Iraq War dead. As soon as they got back to Prezza's flat afterwards he proved himself "a randy old sod… he wanted sex again. He was so up for it".

A doctor writes: Please do not invite the Deputy Prime Minister to memorial services. The erotic excitement could easily kill him…

AS Inspector Knacker continues his fearless investigation into abuses of the honours system, he might care to glance at a new book of essays about PR and journalism, *Where The Truth Lies*.

In the final chapter, Labour MP Derek Wyatt reminisces about his career as a media executive in the 1980s. "At William Heinemann I was a board director when we published a rather dull and innocuous book called *Spycatcher*, and I was at meetings with our chairman, Paul Hamlyn, when he was offered first a knighthood and then a peerage if he'd pull the book."

This, he continues, was "my first brush with Mrs Thatcher… Paul refused to budge and because she feared the worst he was then asked to name his price. He asked if his wife could be made a duchess. We published."

If true, this is clear evidence of an attempted crime under the Honours (Prevention of Abuses) Act, which makes it illegal to offer titles in return for any "valuable consideration", not just cash. No doubt Knacker will ask Wyatt for further details forthwith before pulling in Lady Thatcher for questioning.

Incidentally, Hamlyn got his peerage eventually, from Tony Blair in 1998 – shortly after donating £600,000 to "new" Labour!

THE *Eye* has discovered the staggering costs so far of the woefully behind schedule NHS IT programme, Connecting for Health.

Up to this January £1.024bn had been spent, significantly more than total NHS trust deficits, on a combination of "payments to suppliers and managing delivery of the national programme". By April payments to suppliers had reached £502m, meaning that over half a billion pounds has already been spent just on managing the programme, much of it reportedly on expensive consultants – not to mention the £250,000 salary, plus undisclosed bonus, of CfH boss Richard Granger. These sums come on top of what it costs trusts to take on the new systems – probably hundreds of millions so far as NHS trusts' IT expenditure has gone from £832m in 2002/03 to £1.2bn in 2005/06.

So what has the taxpayer and the health service got for the money? Not much: an unpopular "choose and book" system that was £140m over budget and, as revealed in the last Eye, limited patient record systems in fewer than 10 percent of hospitals that should have had full systems by now (and in only 5 percent of those eventually due to have them), with not much better levels of delivery in primary care trusts. With billions already spent for such a dismal return, the mind boggles as to what the final cost could be.

NEVER mind a change in leadership, pulling out of Iraq or fixing the NHS… Tony Blair knows how to respond to the local election disaster: by improving the party's website.

In his letter to new party chairman Hazel Blears about party renewal (the one circulated to the media before Gordon Brown had seen it), the PM has asked her to "rethink our web presence" to improve its appeal to the under-35s.

He asked Blears to come up with "imaginative proposals" for using "modern communications and IT within the plan for party renewal". Yup, that'll sort things out, no problem.

DAVID MILLS, aka Mr Tessa Jowell, is unhappy with his old friend and country neighbour Alan Rusbridger.

Mills feels that the *Grauniad* should have done him many more favours in its coverage of Jowellgate. Instead, after some initial hesitation, the paper reported the matter with proper rigour.

Dining with Rusbridger recently, Mills spent much of the evening sternly chiding the owlish editor for doing his professional duty. The implication seemed to be that friendship entitled him to an editorial vow of *omerta*.

Has he been spending rather too long with his Italian chums, perhaps?

BLAIR GETS TOUGH

NEWS

HER MAJESTY's Revenue & Customs doesn't seem to want to talk about a concession in the recent finance bill that allows oil giant Shell to avoid tax on profits stashed in tax havens (see last *Eye*).

A clampdown announced in the Budget was expected to put a stop to future losses from the dodge that Shell originally employed last year. But details published shortly afterwards unexpectedly and without explanation declared that if a company had already used the trick – and Shell is the only one known to have done so – it would be exempt from tax on its tax haven profits for ever more!

Asked why the rules provide such a generous let-out out for what HMRC describes as "contrived, tax-driven" schemes, a spokesman would only say that the legislation was designed "to ensure that, so far as possible, it effectively deterred tax-motivated migration without impinging on companies that had migrated for non-tax purposes". Except that one company that clearly "migrated" for tax purposes, Shell, using a shell – ho! ho! – company (see *Eye* 1130) is let off the hook.

HMRC wouldn't comment on whether the department's chairman, Sir David Varney, had any involvement in the legislation or negotiating the concession. Varney, incidentally, spent nearly 30 years working for Shell, rising to become MD of Shell UK.

NO SOONER have lawyers for EDS and the government shaken hands on a compensation deal for the computer firm's tax credits foul-ups than they might have to return to the negotiating table over another public sector fiasco.

The *Eye* first reported that EDS had won the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) contract to run the armed forces' payroll 18 months ago, with the warning that "squaddies might want to start checking their payslips a bit more carefully". Since then the army and navy have shrewdly stepped back, leaving the RAF as the "lead customer" on a deal that went "live" last month, with the first pay packets hitting bank accounts two weeks ago.

Immediately the range of cock-ups is impressive even by EDS's standards. Many pilots haven't received their "flying pay" – a large proportion of their wage – while ground staff whose feet have never left terra firma have. Meanwhile the system repeatedly crashes so confused servicemen and women can't work out what's going on.

QINETIQ's Sleep Laboratory at Cody Technology Park in Farnborough is advertising for people who've been suffering from insomnia for the last few months to take part in experiments.

But just about everyone in Farnborough and the neighbouring area has been having sleepless nights since they learned what is to happen to the former jet engine testing site Qinetiq sold to Prudential.

The Pru and its partner on the project, Astral Developments, plan to build a giant supermarket depot, which at the advertised potential size of 1.25m sq ft would be Britain's biggest building. Nearby residents will not be counting sheep as they desperately try to get off to sleep, but the HGVs thundering along local roads.

Hart District Council is due to discuss the plans this month, but planning officials have already advised them to give the mega shed scheme the go-ahead.

Street Of Shame

"IT'S nice to be romantic rather than bashing people all the time," declared Ross Kemp in the *Sun* – not, as you might suspect, issuing a plea to his wife Rebekah Wade, the paper's editor, but plugging his return in the new series of ITV's *Ultimate Force*.

"Kemp returns as one of ITV's favourite faces tonight," enthused hackette Diana Harris in an "exclusive" 900-word interview which ran alongside no fewer than three plugs for the show in the paper's TV pages. "Alongside his return in hit SAS action drama *Ultimate Force*, there are also more documentaries on gangs and a new BBC production in the pipeline. There seems to be no stopping him."

Er… until the first episode of *Ultimate Farce* actually aired, that is, and garnered a mere 3.8m viewers, helping ITV to its worst-*ever* recorded share of the Saturday audience, 14 percent. Curiously, the *Sun* found no room to record this latest triumph in the career of the boss's husband...

FLEET STREET crime hacks met their match last Sunday in a football game against senior police officers at Imber Court, the Met sports ground. They lost by two goals – and lost two players.

In the first minute David Leppard of the *Sunday Times* was felled by a tackle from a northern chief constable and taken to hospital with a suspected broken ankle.

The next victim was *Daily Mail* crime correspondent Stephen Wright, brought down by the flailing boot of Met commander John McDowall. He too ended up in hospital, with torn ligaments and a chipped ankle, and will be on crutches for a week.

No doubt it is pure coincidence that in several of Wright's reports last year on the shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes he noted that the man in overall charge of intelligence and surveillance was… commander John McDowall!

SO farewell, then, the *Observer*'s short-lived sex column, pulled after what the paper's reader's editor described as "a serious failure of editorial judgement" when artist Sebastian Horsley spent 300 words extolling his "passion for anal sex" next door to the cookery column and the horoscopes.

Perhaps *Observer* magazine editor Allan Jenkins was not the best judge of what was acceptable to a family audience, having had his own graphically erotic email and text correspondence with former mistress Farah Damji circulated online after she decided to forward them all to his wife two years ago, and then wrote about the whole thing in the *Mail on Sunday*.

EMBARRASSMENT for the *Independent*'s teenage columnist Johann Hari, who last month lambasted the right-wing press for its lies and misrepresentation of the asylum issue.

Alas, Hari had done some misrepresenting of his own by bracketing *Spectator* and *Daily Mail* journalist Peter Oborne among this fear-mongering cabal. Oborne pointed out that he has actually been a vigorous defender of Zimbabwean asylum-seekers. The *Indie* has now offered a grovelling apology.

IN AUGUST 1997 paparazzo Jason Fraser arranged the sale of long-lens pictures of Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed relaxing on board a yacht in the Mediterranean.

Three weeks later both were dead – and the newspapers who had offered the biggest sums for Fraser's snaps swore blind they would never do any such thing again.

"The proprietor of the *Daily Mail* announced last night that his papers will not in future purchase pictures taken by paparazzi," the *Mail* announced.

"The *Mirror* will work quickly with the Press Complaints Commission to protect her boys from intrusive paparazzi photographers," the *Mirror* assured its readers.

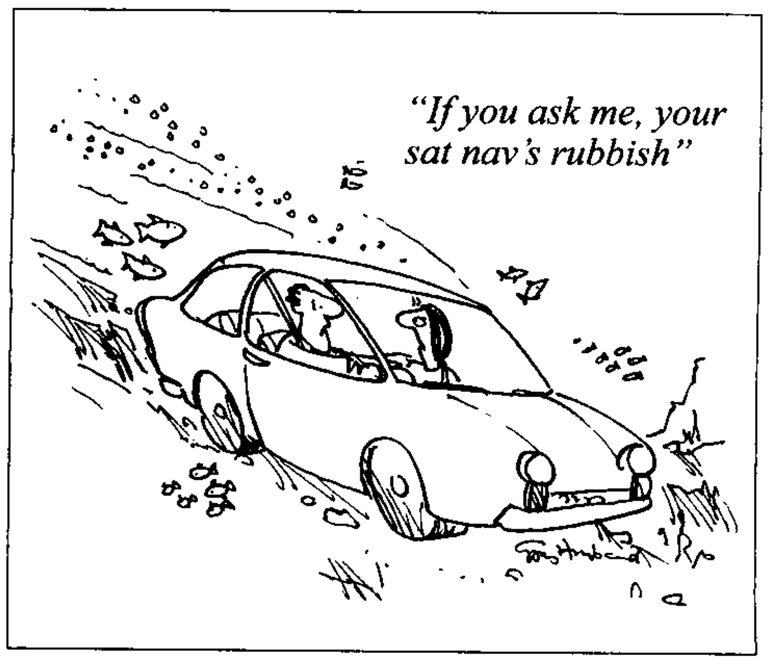
"Let us hope TV bosses will join the *Sun* in refusing to use intrusive royal shots," declared the *Sun*. And so on.

Last week paparazzo Jason Fraser arranged the sale of long-lens pictures of Diana's son Prince William and girlfriend Kate Middleton relaxing on board a yacht in the Caribbean. The *Mail, Mirror, Sun* and *Daily Express* all bought them.

"DIANA DEATH: TRUTH AT LAST", shrieked the *Daily Express* triumphantly on 8 May.

This revelation was not to be confused with the "DIANA: MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH" of 10 April, the "DIANA'S DEATH: PANIC AS TRUTH IS REVEALED" of 20 February, the "DIANA DEATH: 100 YEAR WAIT FOR THE TRUTH" of 19 October 2005 or the "TRUTH ABOUT DIANA'S DEATH WILL NEVER BE REVEALED" of 15 June last.

"Princess's body was illegally embalmed to cover up pregnancy," ran the sub-headline, an exclusive revelation that has only been aired in the *Express* on 43 previous occasions. And what evidence did hack Martin Evans offer that the late princess was pregnant when she died? In the 24th paragraph of the story, tucked well back on page 5, he pointed out that "a senior French policeman claims he saw medical papers showing Diana was pregnant". No further detail was given.



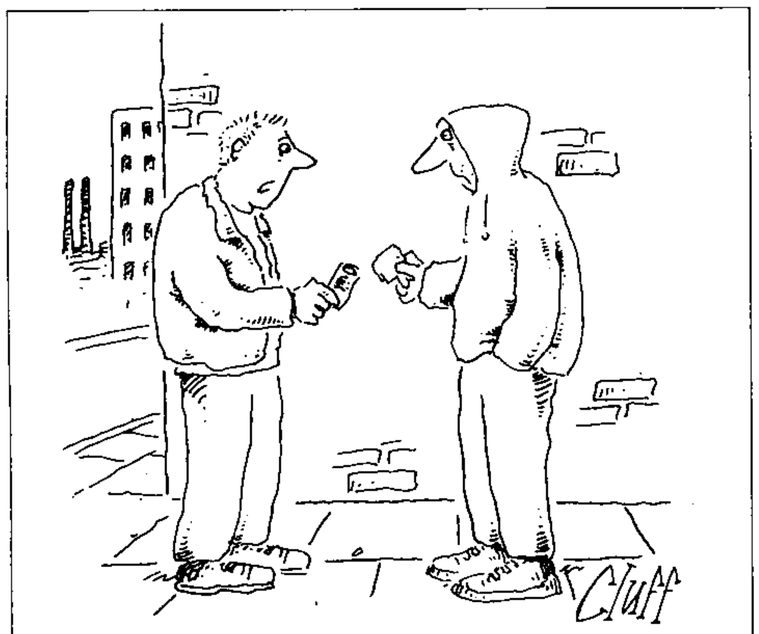
HOW CHEQUEBOOK JOURNALISM WORKS

"THE reporter said I had to put a sex bit in otherwise I wouldn't get the £10,000. But I had been drunk out of my face. All I remembered was Simon making a cup of tea and offering me Pringles with his top off. I told the lady to make up what she wanted. And she really did. She made it like a Jackie Collins book." – Terri Reece explains to the *Observer* how *News of the Screws* hackette Georgina Dickinson livened up the details of her "relationship" with England cricketer Simon Jones.

PIERS MORON launched his new venture, a weekly newspaper called *First News* aimed at primary school-age children, in characteristic fashion.

"This has never been done before, and it's a really clever idea," he told anyone who would listen. "There are 193 magazines directly targeted at nine to 12-year-olds in this country and there has never been a proper newspaper. It's an untapped market."

Well, yes – if you don't count *The Newspaper*, a bi-monthly which has been distributed through schools for the past six years; a very successful news agency called Children's Express which has been running since 1995; the online *24:7 News* which offers a choice of frequently-updated editions for different age groups; the environmental quarterly *Wilderness Challenge*; or *Oink!* a monthly newspaper for 7-12 year olds focusing on financial issues – though on reflection, it would probably be best if Morgan kept his distance from that one.



"These are fairtrade drugs, aren't they?"

THE group managing editor of Dirty Des's *Express* titles, John Maddock, has found himself in a spot of trouble after managing to offer a job to the wrong person.

Two graduate-trainee hacks, Tom Wainwright and Tom Price, work like slaves for a pittance on the *Sunday Express* business section in the hope of one day becoming salaried employees. So imagine Wainwright's delight when Maddock called him into his office to offer him a job as a staff journalist.

Alas, Maddock summoned Wainwright back into his office the next day to break the news that he'd got the wrong Tom. He had meant to offer the job to Price instead.

JUST FANCY THAT!

JOHN "Predator" Prescott didn't restrict his groping activities to his secretaries or other MPs' wives. Journalists were not immune.

Lord Birt once felt obliged to send a letter of apology to TV critic Jaci Stephen after Prescott had put his hand up her skirt at one of Birt's Christmas parties.

Birt said he was sorry he was unable to protect his guests against the randy Prezza. Such gallantry!

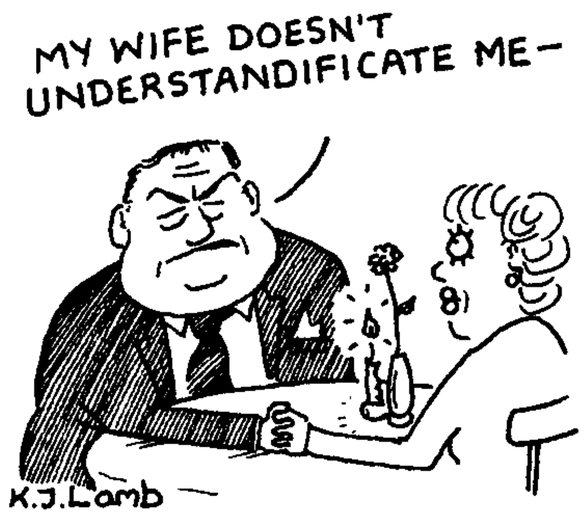
PREZZAWATCH

MORE than 20 years ago, in August 1985 (*Eye* 618), HP Sauce described an end-of-session celebration by Labour MPs which "ended on the Commons terrace with a young lady falling out of her dress and other regrettable incidents".

The fiasco, we reported, "has been blamed on John 'Rambo' Prescott, the party's employment spokesman". A furious Prezza wanted Labour to issue a denial on his behalf, but was eventually talked out of it by a party press officer who warned that a public statement might prompt further inquiries into what actually happened at the knees-up.

In a 1991 interview Pauline Prescott revealed one reason for the success of her marriage to Prezza. "We keep in touch by phone. He calls at least six times a day. People ring here from London to find out where he is and often I know what's going on before he does. You hear a lot about MPs' marriages breaking up, but you don't follow your husband around all the time."

In January 1992 John Prescott and other panellists on the TVS show *Questions* were asked about the alleged affair between Bill Clinton and Gennifer Flowers. Prezza grumbled that wild allegations of this kind were always being made about public figures. "Something has happened to me today and I was just wondering if I should say it here. But I will say it. I heard an anonymous note was actually being circulated in the press gallery in the House of Commons suggesting I and others had had an affair with a certain person." He added that it was of course "totally untrue".



Alastair Campbell was scampering around TV and radio studios last week defending Prescott, whom he described as an "old friend". This may surprise anyone who recalls a *Daily Mirror* article from May 1992, when Prescott was a candidate for Labour's deputy leadership. Under the headline "Why Tories are backing Prescott the bruiser in Labour fight", political correspondent Alastair Campbell (*for it was he*) denounced Prezza as a pathetic blunderer – a "big girl's blouse" who "appeals to Tories no end".

It's also strange to hear Campbell complaining that the Prescott coverage proves political hacks are obsessed by "soap opera" rather than "serious debate". Can this by any chance by the same Alastair Campbell who in 1998 gave a lobby briefing on Tony Blair's support for Deirdre Rachid, a (fictional) *Coronation Street* character jailed for fraud? "His view is that it is clear to anyone with eyes in their head that she is innocent," Campbell raged, demanding that the scriptwriters should bow to public and parliamentary opinion by releasing her – "and, while they're about it, make sure that Sally and Kevin Webster, whose marriage is in trouble, live happily ever after".

Interviewed by Chrissy Iley for the *Sunday Times* in October 1994, Prescott complained about his media image: "I was this cliché, a bull in the china shop, a big northern sexist git." Nothing, he insisted, could be further from the truth. He was a "feminist", devoted to "fighting for positive discrimination" for women. Why, he had even read Marilyn French's book *The Women's Room* and was "appalled" by men's exploitation of women. "Men have to be re-educated, there's no doubt," he declared. A mere 12 years on, it seems the reeducation still has some way to go.

"Hats off – make that chapeaux off – to the Deputy Prime Minister. Gorgeous, scowling John Prescott has got himself accused of behaving like an 'inveterate macho' by a French woman. C'est magnifique! This could be our proudest day since Waterloo… A Northern lad of a certain vintage, John Prescott is the kind who was raised to open doors for the ladies and may well have a certain old-fashioned attitude. And yet women I know who have worked for him swear he is kindly, extremely respectful and often a little in awe of them." – Allison Pearson, *Evening Standard,* 29 November 2000.

"He [Prescott] strikes me as the sort of bar-room buffoon who calls the barmaid 'love', refers to his wife as the 'missus' and can't be doing with that new-fangled New Labour politically-correct approach to women in the workplace." – Sue Carroll, *Daily Mirror*, 29 November 2000.

"Cheryl Gillan, a Tory foreign affairs spokeswoman, was rebuked by the Speaker yesterday for branding John Prescott 'a male chauvinist pig'… Michael Martin, the Speaker of the House, halted questioning, saying: 'I require temperate language in this house'." – *Independent*, 2 May 2001.

"Can I say to the right hon. gentleman that it is true that I may get the grammar wrong? I have to take the blame for that, as that was my education, and I am responsible for it, but I would sooner get the words wrong than get my judgment wrong… If there is a choice between getting my words wrong and getting my judgment wrong, I would sooner have my problem than his." – John Prescott to William Hague, when they were standing in for their party leaders at prime minister's questions on 29 March this year.

Before pulling out at the last minute (ho ho), Prescott offered to give his first post-Tracey interview to Andrew Marr – and no wonder. Last March, at a big party in Hull to celebrate Prezza's 50 years of party membership, the surprise present was a film of his "greatest hits" compiled by his son David and fondly narrated by the BBC's political editor, one Andrew Marr.

The select committee monitoring John Prescott's department issued a report three months ago revealing that one in 10 workers at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister said they had been bullied in the past year. Six per cent reported "harassment" while 22 percent had witnessed "unfair treatment".

"Staff are being bullied by more senior people," said one MP on the committee, "and one gets the impression it comes from the top." A claim indignantly denied by Prezza's spokesman, who said his record was "no worse than the rest of government… None of this is in any way to do with the political leadership of the department."

With perfect timing, the committee published a follow-up report last week describing what the ODPM is doing about the problem. It boasted of "awareness training" to ensure "a positive climate for all staff", and "workshops on treating staff with dignity and respect for senior and middle managers to help them recognise and deal with inappropriate behaviour in the workplace". Presumably this would cover instances where, say, a minister demands a blow job at his desk from a diary secretary.

The department also put in place "a significant change programme" with a focus on "talent development" and "managing performance". Senior managers were to be equipped with "a self-awareness/360-degree feedback tool". Alas, now that Prezza has had his department taken away, he'll be unable to develop the "talent" in his office with the aid of these exciting tools.

"You could not wish for a deputy more loyal, more true and more decent." – Tony Blair, 17 May 2001.

CALLED TO ORDURE

SNOUTS in the moolah at the Blairised House of Lords, where peers voted to pay their new Speaker £135,000 a year – the equivalent of about £1,000 for each day the House sits.

Until recently the Lords would have been appalled by the idea of paying even £1,000 a week. The Lord Chancellor, who sat on the Woolsack for an hour or two on perhaps 150 afternoons a year, was paid £29,946 for this part of his work.

Then Lord Chancellor Charlie Falconer decided he couldn't give a toss about the chamber and dumped centuries of custom by saying he was too busy to turn up. Will he be relinquishing the attendant £29,946? Dream on.

Hence the opening for a new Speaker, who will receive, ka-ching, ka-ching, a basic salary of £101,000 plus some £34,000 in expenses. Oh, plus pension, staff, foreign jollies, Buckingham Palace banquet invitations and sumptuous directorship opportunities in retirement.

The golden package was decided after a Lords debate in which a few peers did express disgust at the profligacy and greed on display. They were ignored.

Silver-moustached Earl Ferrers (Con) made a magnificently exasperated speech. "We have all gone stark, staring bonkers," cried Ferrers, suggesting the pay should be no more than £30,000. He was watched with lumpen resentment by the cud-chewers on the government bench.

Lord Barnett (Labour MP Joel, as was) thought the hefty pay deal "ludicrous" and suggested reducing the basic to £79,000. Horrified Blairites looked at him as though he were some sort of hair-shirted maniac. Lord Trefgarne, a former Tory Defence Minister, observed that the Speaker's duties were laughably light. His colleague the Earl of Onslow noted that by fiddling around with the law lords (who used to cost the country £180,000 a year) Falconer had brought in a system that costs £10m. Now Falconer was costing the state yet more money.

But the Lords is not what it was. The place has been so stuffed by Tony's Cronies that it has lost all shame and sees public funds as a large pot of sherbet. Up stepped Lady Symons, whose husband Phil Bassett is a key Blair aide, to argue that the Lords was "undervalued". She suggested that a big salary for the Speaker would improve the House's standing with the media. Yeah, right.

Viscount Bledisloe, a crossbench lawyer, sneered that £30,000 was the sort of "pittance" paid to a "salaried clerk". He compared the £135,000 package to "a halfpennyworth of tar". Ex-Labour MP Lord Marsh was even more snobbish. He thought Barnett's £79,000 suggestion the sort of sum that one might generously offer "if hiring a chief executive officer of a small engineering company in the Midlands". But it was "a bit out of date by today's standards".

Lord Dean (Con) argued that the big wonga was essential because you had to attract a Speaker who could do things like representing the Lords at monarchs' jubilees (though it seems unlikely we'll be having another of those for a good 20 years or more).

The mad thing is that Lords debates are conducted in such a polite manner there is no real need for a Speaker. In the event of any slight turbulence, a senior minister simply lopes up to the despatch box, clears his throat and murmurs a very mild ruling about whose turn it was to speak.

But no, they were determined to spend our money. There'll be plenty more of this soon, too. A depressed Lord Lucas (Con) feared that we are fast moving to a salaried House of Lords. He reckoned, perhaps accurately, that the Speaker's salary was all about "setting a marker" as to what the new era of peers will in future demand for themselves.

After the debate a few old hands repaired to the Bishops' Bar where one malcontent consoled himself by observing that the new Speaker will be so rich he's bound to get a call from Lord Levy, tapping him for a few grand.

'Gavel Basher'

"GIEVE rocked by new Home Office scandal" screamed the *Independent on Sunday*, "revealing" that former permanent secretary Sir John Gieve, who became deputy governor of the Bank of England in January, had presided not only over the foreign prisoners fiasco but also a £1bn hole in his department's accounts.

In fact the *Eye* reported the scandal back in February (issue 1152).

So, given his financial bungling, how did Sir John's appointment to a senior post at the central bank go through on the nod? The reason is that the National Audit Office (NAO) report revealing the mess he left behind at the Home Office came out months late (because he had delayed producing the department's accounts) and – very conveniently – five days after the parliamentary "confirmation hearing" for his Bank appointment. So MPs never had the chance to raise Sir John's embarrassing inability to balance the books.

The suspicion of a classic establishment stitch-up is only heightened by news that cabinet secretary Sir Gus O'Donnell tried, unsuccessfully, to block attempts by the public accounts committee (PAC) to haul Gieve over the coals two weeks ago. Meanwhile there's no sign that he's leaving Threadneedle Street anytime soon.

WHILE the media pored over the cost of Cherie Blair's hairdresser, Michael Howard's make-up and Charles Kennedy's bar bill from last year's declared election expenses, most of them passed over the name of Rupert Darwell to whom the Tories paid £97,394 for consultancy work.

Like David Cameron, Darwell was an adviser to former Chancellor Norman "Black Wedneday" Lamont which should have automatically set off alarm bells in Central Office. Together they forced through the disastrous policy of rail privatisation. When the Tories were kicked out of the office in 1997, Darwell was taken on as an adviser to Railtrack because he was "extremely knowledgeable on government and Treasury thinking".

Three years later, after the Hatfield disaster, Darwell was still defending the policy. Writing in the *Daily Telegraph*, he hailed "the gains brought by privatisation… Introducing an element of competition and choice will sharpen Railtrack's incentive to perform and offer value for money. It will produce a better, safer railway."

By way of an encore, in 2002 Darwell embarrassed Iain Duncan Smith's leadership by criticising its "Vichy response to Blairism". Just the man to turn to for a hundred grand's worth of political advice!

Fears for mums over frolic acid

Sheffield Star

Number crunching

26%

■ Percentage of voters who voted Labour in 'drubbing' at local elections last week

■ Percentage of voters who voted Labour at last local elections

NEWS FROM THE SANDPIT

JUST before he was plucked from his job as Defence Secretary to save Tony Blair's skin at the Home Office, John Reid appeared on *Channel Four News* to explain why Explosion Suppressant Foam (ESF) was not supplied to all transport aircraft, following the loss last year of 10 lives and an unprotected RAF Hercules, brought down by small arms fire in Iraq.

"The biggest threat," he revealed, "is from surface-to-air missiles, not small arms fire"; the destructive power of missiles making the use of ESF pretty pointless.

In fact the decision not to use the foam was made entirely for reasons of cost – small arms fire might not be the "biggest" threat, but it is a threat all the same. And if surface-to-air missiles are so dangerous, why did the MoD cancel the fitting of the most sophisticated Defensive Air Suites (DAS) to Hercules transport planes back in 2004? A plucky band of fly boys and ex-pilots have been urging the Ministry to see the error of its ways and they are now rushing to fit "some" aircraft with the updated DAS.

The loss of five lives and a Lynx helicopter over Basra illuminated another issue, this time a tactical one. The press has reported that helicopters are used like buses to transport troops and supplies around and this is what makes them vulnerable to ground fire. True; but helicopters are also used for "top cover" by troops on patrol, who rely on their onboard cameras and communications systems: during the troubles in Northern Ireland there was one parked above West Belfast practically all the time. These missions have currently been suspended, placing troops on the ground at greater risk.

The Americans use armoured helicopter gunships like the Apache for much of this work. Whenever a transport helicopter is in the air, a gunship goes along with it. But for reasons of cost, the Brits only have a tiny handful of these aircraft. Indeed, we've yet to see a British Apache over Basra accompanying the Lynx – which is "armoured" with ballistic Kevlar floor mats that are as much use as a chocolate teapot.

'Square Basher'

"He wants hanging brought back – but only from sustainable trees"

REVOLVING DOORS

TWO former Labour ministers have ignored anti-sleaze regulations covering the revolving door between government and business.

Former Defence Minister Ivor Caplin and Transport Minister David Jamieson have both taken jobs with lobbying companies after giving up their ministerial positions in the 2005 election.

Caplin surprised many by refusing to fight his Hove seat in 2005. Instead, he left parliament and this year became a senior consultant with Foresight Communications, a lobbyist that represents firms with defence interests – including warplane maker EADS, computer firm EDS and caterer Sodexho.

Caplin is supposed to consult the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments before taking this kind of job. The committee told *Private Eye* that Caplin had in fact sought advice in January, but the committee was still "waiting for further information about the post". It had sought clarification from Caplin on the lobbying job before making a ruling. Caplin has not given that clarification but has taken the job.

Former Transport Minister David Jamieson meanwhile did not even bother to consult the committee before joining Golden Arrow Communications, which specialises in representing transport firms including Hutchinson Ports, National Express and train firm GNER.

A SMALL flock of spin-doctors is flying away from troubled ministers to spend more time lobbying for corporations.

John Prescott needs all the help he can get at the moment, but his chief spokesman Alan Schofield – his mouthpiece since 2002 – is to start work shortly at Bell Pottinger, the lobby firm founded by Sir Tim Bell. Prescott's private secretary, Chris Parr, is already at Bell Pottinger, having joined in January.

Funnily enough Prescott's department has just launched a major "review" of housing and regeneration. This will enable commercial developers to win valuable planning permission for casinos, shopping centres and expensive estates so long as they dress up their schemes with the minimum necessary sprinkles of social housing and "brownfield regeneration". Bell Pottinger already represents big developers like Orion & St James Developments, and its acquisition of well-informed ex-Prescott aides will no doubt be attractive to other developers.

Meanwhile troubled Tessa Jowell's special adviser Roger Sharp is off to become chief spin doctor for mobile phone firm O2 (yes, mobile phones are regulated by Ofcom, which is overseen by Jowell's media and culture department).

JUST FANCY THAT

5.10 WEAKEST LINK; (T) (S) Party Election Broadcast. By The Conservative Party.

Lincolnshire Echo 19.4.06

5.10 Weakest Link; Party Election Broadcast by the Liberal Democrats

The Times 20.4.06

Number crunchings

+2% ■ Rise in Conservative local election vote under David Cameron which could see him on his way to Downing Street

+8% ■ Rise in Conservative local election vote under William Hague which didn't

Down on the Farm

"Still waiting for that DEFRA cheque?"

NOTHING succeeds like failure. Witness the elevation to Foreign Secretary of Defra's disastrous Margaret Beckett, who has presided over an administrative catastrophe arguably equal for sheer blundering incompetence to anything perpetrated by her hopeless colleagues Charles Clarke, John Prescott and Patricia Hewitt.

By the end of last year, it will be recalled, Beckett (aka Rosa Klebb) should have paid out more than £1.4bn in EU subsidies to the farmers of England. Their Scottish and Welsh counterparts were paid. Their competitors across the rest of the EU were paid. But because Rosa had come up with a uniquely complex system for handing out the EU's new "single farm payment", and then commissioned Accenture (formerly Arthur Andersen) to devise the necessary software, England's farmers had, uniquely, received not a penny.

Of course many urban folk will cry "too bloody right – why should farmers get any subsidies anyway?" But the fact remains that, so long as the EU insists on farmers being subsidised, it is hardly very sensible to want one group of farmers not to receive a handout, when they are expected to sell their wares in a "single market" in which their competitors are all being subsidised to the hilt.

Originally Rosa's Rural Payments Agency had promised Accenture £18m for arranging the payments in England. But somehow it all became even more complicated, so that Accenture had to ask for its wages to be doubled, to £37m. Still the payments didn't materialise. In January, they were promised in February. In February they were promised in March. Then, although a trickle of payments began, the deadline for the majority of payments was extended to July, at which point Brussels would have got seriously shirty at such incompetence and taken the UK to court. When it became obvious that even this deadline would be missed, Rosa had to ask Brussels to extend the deadline yet again to October.

In other words, for nearly a year most English farmers will have been deprived of money they were promised. Farm debt has soared to a record £10bn, as they borrow from the banks to keep afloat and to pay suppliers. The government has expected the farmers to continue paying VAT and PAYE for their employees, under the threat of large fines if any payments were late. Meanwhile the government has enjoyed the benefit of more than £1bn of Brussels money, on which it could earn hefty sums in interest, while expecting the farmers to pay hefty interest to the banks for all the cash they have been forced to borrow.

Not surprisingly farmers have been at their wits' end. Understandable has been the response of Clinton Marston, who runs a family farm in Northamptonshire, and who has for months been harried by the Environment Agency, answerable to Defra, to pay something called a "land drainage charge". This is a tax peculiar to certain parts of England, particularly in the east, the reason for which most farmers find it hard to understand, since they seem to receive no benefit for their money. Faced with the agency's latest threatening demand, he has insisted he will consider paying this tax only when Defra gets round to paying what it owes him. Alas, this is not the kind of simple logic Rosa would understand. But now she's been promoted, she can wash her hands of the whole sorry mess.

'Muckspreader'

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

SO MUCH for Gordon Brown's promise to use the European Union to promote trade justice for the poor: the British government is preparing to back an EU trade deal that will allow European boats to fish in illegally occupied waters off the Western Sahara.

The EU has negotiated a fisheries deal with Morocco, which in 1975 invaded and occupied Western Sahara, whose indigenous people, the Saharawi, still live in Algerian desert refugee camps or under harsh Moroccan occupation. Under the proposed agreement, Morocco can sell fishing licences for waters off the occupied territories – waters which have some of the most attractive shoals for European (particularly Spanish) boats.

While the International Court of Justice recognises the right of the Saharawi people to their land, the UN is running negotiations to try to end the occupation. But these are stalled in the face of Moroccan intransigence and western indifference.

The British government is well aware that the deal is unfair. When Labour MP Jeremy Corbyn forced a short debate on the treaty last month, Agriculture Minister Ben Bradshaw was sympathetic. However, friendly noises from the fisheries people at Defra count for little, as the Foreign Office (FCO) has set its mind to vote for the agreement.

Sources say the FCO thinks the proposal will get through the European Union, despite opposition from countries like Sweden and from many Euro MPs, and has decided to vote for the treaty regardless. The diplomatic need to keep friendly relations with the Spanish, who are keen to fish in the occupied waters, trumps any sense of justice.

When the *Eye* asked the FCO about the treaty, a spokesman said it had checked on the deal's legality by asking the European Commission – and the commission responded that a treaty it had negotiated was legal. However, a leaked legal opinion from the European parliament's development committee says: "The formulation chosen presents the risk that EU vessels will actually fish beyond Morocco territorial waters, notably in the waters of Western Sahara." War On Want, which is coordinating the campaign against the agreement in the UK, said a legal challenge to the treaty was likely.

EU-phemisms

WE WILL OPEN OUR MARKETS TO EASTERN EUROPEAN WORKERS AFTER CERTAIN CRITERIA ARE MET
OLD EUROPE RENEWS WORKER BARRIERS
RGJ

When hell freezes over, over my dead body, etc, etc...

TV

Election Night (BBC1)

IN the same way that some attractive young women sleep with revolting old men in the hope that they will eventually get the money, the BBC covers local elections not because it wants to but because it's one of the things that has to be endured to keep the licence fee.

Given that relatively few viewers tune in when the prime minister is being chosen, there's even more of a struggle to make the balance of power in Hammersmith & Fulham seem fascinating. The chances of getting an audience are still smaller because, while ITV and Channel 4 go head-to-head for general elections, they leave locals to the BBC and run interesting programmes instead.

In desperation, the trick of the BBC coverage, in its own version of the octogenerian billionaire's fifth wife, is to close its eyes and pretend it's really something else that is happening: ie, that the locals voting over pot-holes and a recent change in the colour of the wheelie-bins are really taking part in "a referendum on the government" or "a litmus test of what is happening in British politics".

Such a conceit was even more tempting this time because the council voting followed a week in which three cabinet ministers – Prescott, Clarke and Hewitt – had faced humiliations. Unfortunately, the problem for the Beeb's coverage was that its bosses are terrified of offending New Labour and have a long-standing policy not to mention the private lives of politicians, an edict which previously reached a peak when there was a blanket ban on references to Peter Mandelson's sexuality.

In the past, the corporation had some cover over this because most broadsheet newspapers were equally squeamish about bonking politicians. Now, though, it's only the *Financial Times* which restrains itself from front-page comment on Prescott's chipolata sausage and so Two Jags' shags brought the BBC's reporting to its biggest crisis over the gap between its own editorial standards and the rest of the press.

Election Night, supposedly covering the locals, solved this problem in the old weaselly media way running a montage of tabloid newspaper headlines about John and Tracey with music running underneath. David Dimbleby, presenting, then made a few portmanteau references to the "Clarke, Prescott and Hewitt" difficulties but was firmly told by John Reid, the studio guest representing Labour, that the middle wicket bit of his question was "a private matter".

The other possibility of excitement on the local results show was the presence of so many new faces. Not only had the Tory and Lib Dem leaders changed since last year's Election 2005 show, but Nick Robinson was making his big night debut as political editor, replacing Andrew Marr.

Dimbleby, though, was still up front, as he has been for the last 40 years, and his presence revealed a tussle going on in BBC News over the future look of the voting shows. Under the previous BBC1 top honcho, Lorraine Heggessy, Dimbleby was being eased out, with Huw Edwards presiding over the local ballot-box shows. The same spring-cleaning – backed by new head of TV news, Peter Horrocks – led to Jeremy Vine taking over the swingometer from Peter Snow and Emily Maitlis being moved behind the *Newsnight* desk.

New BBC1 controller Peter Fincham favours the American model of grey-haired gravitas on big occasions and has given Dimbers a new boost, even allowing him last Thursday to break the absolute TV rule against one person presenting two separate shows in a row. Having hosted *Question Time* from Barnes, he then materialised seconds later in the election studio.

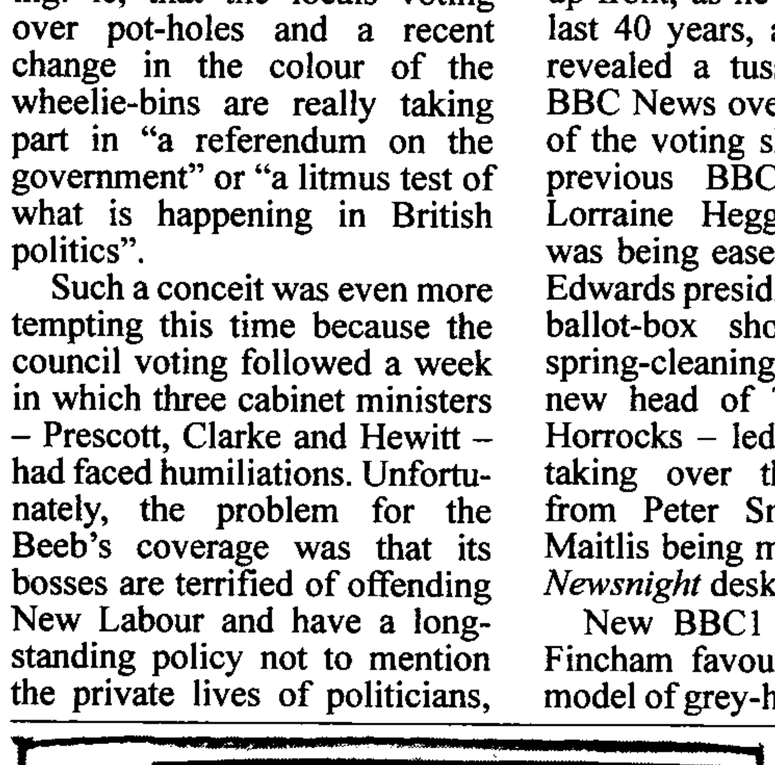
To counter this demonstration of grey power, the producers of the results show required Dimbleby to throw as soon as possible to an emergency young cutey segment hosted by Emily Maitlis. The conceit of this sequence was that groups of voters and pundits were waiting on high stools at tables in a London pub, requiring Emily, in her trouser-suit, to perform an elaborate walking shot, during which she would occasionally slide on to a stool to ask a few questions.

Maitlis has about 15 degrees and speaks roughly 68 languages and so there's no question that she has the qualifications to front current affairs; but she might just watch the tape and ask herself whether, if Huw Edwards had been doing the item, the camera positions would have been quite so obviously positioned to show his legs. Unluckily for Maitlis, the last hour of coverage from the studio was blacked out by a power cut, requiring her to improvise er... manfully .

Vine didn't have to show a leg, sliding on and off bar stools, but in his first shot at the Snow role, he was also subjected to desperate production efforts to make municipal politics more interesting. Holograms of the party leaders hovered behind him and, because Sir Ming was once a sprinter, there was a self-defeatingly elaborate metaphor about "whether Ming will drop the baton".

The baton was a giveaway metaphor for what was going in the studio. Maitlis has sprinted past Wark, Kearney, Bruce and the rest in the race to be the BBC's first election night frontwoman, but Huw Edwards finds his lane blocked by Dimbers. The only good news for the losers in these ambition sprints was that almost nobody would be watching.

'Remote Controller'



THE NEOPHILIACS

"Heists are the new rock and roll." – *Daily Star.*

"Food is the new rock and roll." – *Western Morning News.*

"Is the breast pump the new BlackBerry?" – Slate.com.

"Is Wayne Rooney the new Queen Victoria?" – *Independent.*

"Nobody bothers to say any more that football is the new rock'n'roll." – *Independent.*

"Football is the new rock'n' roll." – *News of the World.*

"Reality could just be the new rock 'n' roll." – *Times* Educational Supplement.

DUMB BRITAIN

Magic AM breakfast show, South Yorks

DJ Danny: Napoleon died in St Helen's (sic) on this day 165 years ago. What did he say on his death bed?

Lisa from Doncaster: Kiss me, Hardy.

DJ Danny *(fanfare)*: You're right!

Quizmania, ITV 2

Greg Scott: We're looking for a word that goes in front of "clock".

Contestant: "Grandfather".

Scott: "Grandfather clock" is already up there. Say something else.

Contestant: "Panda".

Phil Wood show, BBC Radio Manchester

Phil: What's eleven squared?

Contestant: I don't know.

Phil: I'll give you a clue. It's two ones with a two in the middle.

Contestant: Is it five?

MEDIA NEWS

"STRONG coverage of politics throughout England and Wales has long been a feature of ITV's regional programme output," said ITV News chief executive Clive Jones last October.

He was announcing that all coverage of local political issues would henceforth go out at the peak-time slot of 11.30 on Thursday nights. "These new schedule slots will ensure we have a national showcase for regional politics."

And indeed, on the night that local election results were announced across much of England, ITV cleared the schedules for a four-hour rolling programme from midnight onwards. Unfortunately, it was *The Mint*, ITV's new interactive gameshow which allows viewers to phone in at 60p a time to try their luck at such challenges as "name this musical: TH SND F MSC".

HATS off to News 24 producers who hired a helicopter – at £1,000 an hour – to bag aerial shots of the spot where police had found the remains of Gladys Hammond.

The video footage of the tent erected by forensic teams was pretty much identical to the shots of said tents taken by the rest of the media, standing on terra firma only yards away.

TYPICAL of the BBC's reluctance to discuss John Prescott's legover scandal, the first *Question Time* edition after the news broke chose to begin with the story of the 63-year-old pregnant grandmother. Much safer territory.

The panel – including William Hague, Margaret Beckett and Richard Littlejohn – duly criticised the extreme selfishness of those who breed in their 60s: less likely to see their children grow up, embarrassing for the kids at the schoolgates, etc, etc.

Strangely, even the rottweiler Littlejohn omitted to point out that there was someone close to hand with personal knowledge of veteran parenthood: none other than presenter David Dimbleby, who fathered a child at the age of 60.

ANOTHER fine performance by the BBC's Paul Lambert, a producer and fixer at the Beeb's Millbank studios where the corporation's political coverage is made.

Lambert, nicknamed "Gobby", is notorious for chasing ministers down streets for comment and for shouting out bold questions at press conferences. Ten days ago, at the height of the dramas, doomed Charles Clarke went to the Beeb studios for a radio interview. He was just leaving when Lambert sprang out of the shadows and "doorstepped" the then Home Secretary – on the BBC's own premises!

AMONG the consultancy firms earning an estimated £2m advising the BBC on its ridiculous move to Manchester (yet to be agreed by the governors) are Siemens and Capita Symonds, a company that belongs to that well known expert in broadcasting, the Capita group.

Plans for the BBC to outsource its human resources, occupational health and recruitment departments to Crapita, which already administers collection of the TV licence, are well under way; and Siemens already "owns" BBC Technology.

Staff being asked either to move to Manchester or be made redundant wonder what kind of independent advice these consultancies are in a position to offer.

MORE proof emerges of the BBC's surrender, or "outsourcing" of its editorial control of programmes, from director-general Mark Thompson's speech to the WeMedia Global Forum.

The forum's website says it "brings together the trailblazers of the connected society", including "investors" and "activists, seeking to tap into the potential of digital networks" – so not exactly your average licence-payer, then. This year's do was hosted by the BBC and Reuters and included "networking receptions and a World Café" – a global "town hall" where 300 "international participants" from "investors", "public relations", "decision makers" and "NGOs" could waste licence-payers' money while plotting to end the BBC's independence.

Thompson told the well-lunched crew that a "second digital wave… could see some traditional media sink without a trace" – a reference to good old Auntie, perhaps?

To prevent this the BBC must "partner new digital communities", crucially, without editorial interference, "not seeking to define their 'new journalism' but acting as an enabler to allow a wider range of voices to be heard" – voices provided not by licence-payers, of course, but by the "decision makers" enjoying their hospitality

"THE BBC's subsidised tentacles spread ever deeper into territory where it has no place," shrieked the *Sun*'s editorial following Mark Thompson's latest pronouncements on the corporation's future.

What – apart from the usual ("It uses its vast resources on the cheap to imitate Sky TV, part-owned by the *Sun*'s parent company, News International") – had provoked the paper's ire? "The BBC plans to revamp its website and cash in on the success of sites like MySpace.com… the 'premier destination' for unsigned bands," the *Sun* revealed.

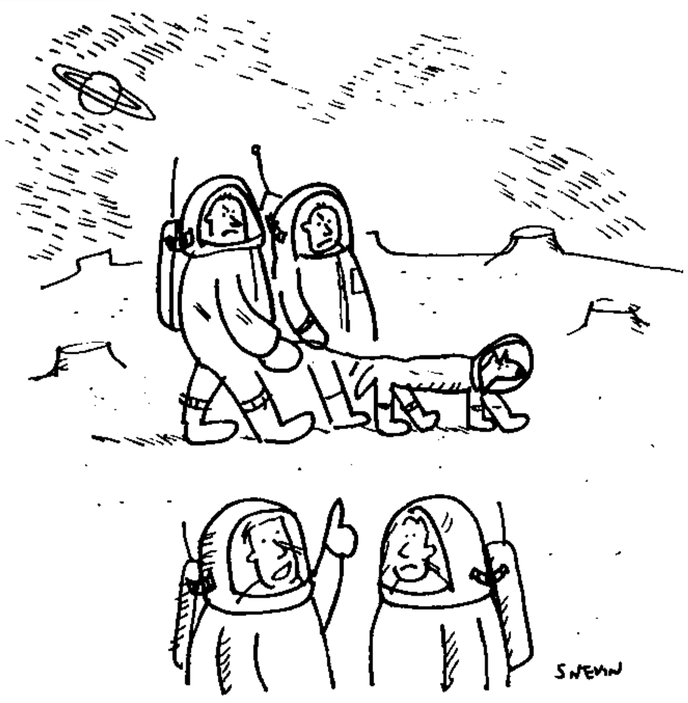
That would be the MySpace.com purchased by Rupert Murdoch last July for $580m and, as is traditional, ruthlessly plugged in his newspapers ever since. The *Sun* has mentioned the website 48 times so far since January; the *Times* and *Sunday Times* are lagging just behind with 45 plugs between them.

Back in February, Mark Henderson in the *Times* allayed any parents' possible fears about the internet by reassuring them that "net surfing is not responsible for anti-social young people – quite the opposite." How so? "MySpace.com, the fifth-most viewed website in America, allows its 56 million members to create online profiles and correspond with people with similar interests."

As indeed was the case in Kansas last month, where five teenagers planned to mark the anniversary of the Columbine massacre with a killing spree of their own, as organised on MySpace – a story neither the *Times* nor *Sunday Times* thought worth reporting.

IN MARCH 2004 the *Guardian* asked Kelvin MacKenzie, then chairman and chief executive of The Wireless Group, owner of Talk Sport radio, why viewers should continue to subsidise the BBC at a cost of £10 a month, and under threat of jail if they did not pay.

Kelvin's reply? "The answer I expect… would be to keep 26,000 rather untalented left-of-centre turds in a job."



"Oh no, Asbonauts"

Now the BBC can add another untalented turd to this payroll. Presenting a World Cup documentary series for its Five Live radio station from the end of this month will be… Kelvin MacKenzie!

A new football pitch is being built on Lismore Circus and more work is planned this Spring to create a dog free area for dogs.

Labour election leaflet – Camden

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

THE launch of the Proms had the BBC straining to produce ever more extravagant paeans of self-praise to convince us that the 2006 season would be the biggest, best, most glorious, etc, ever.

And who can doubt it, for Her Majesty the Queen, herself, will be attending. Not exactly known for her love of classical music, she has been coerced into turning up for Prom 7 to sit through a piece specially written for her 80th birthday by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. Alas, according to palace sources, her enthusiasm for this was not enhanced by the discovery that, although the small piece is called *A Little Birthday Music,* it in fact lasts a whole 20 minutes.

The last time HMQ went to the Proms it was to hear music by William Walton that had been written for her coronation – a fact which, as her subsequent backstage comments suggested, she had forgotten.

The Queen's ignorance of the musical world has nothing on the ignorance of our regal Culture Secretary, Tessa Jowell, however. The other week Ms Jowell accompanied Condoleezza Rice to a concert by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, after which there was a dinner at which Ms Rice (who *does* know about music) gave a well-received and informed speech.

At the same dinner Ms Jowell asked one of Philharmonic's principal players: "Are you *paid* for playing in the orchestra?" An urgent briefing with the Arts Council is surely needed.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

AD NAUSEAM

"FROM Chuck Out Your Chintz to Stop Being So English, from Live Unlimited to Van Den Puup, Ikea had built an advertising voice that was ownable and original… But last week Ikea lost its voice."

So mourned Naresh Ramchandani in a recent 800-word dirge in the *Guardian*. His point? That Ikea's advertising isn't as good as it used to be. This apparently, is "a loss for advertising as a whole".

It was only seven paragraphs in that Ramchandani thought to mention that the "ownable and original" voice was created by his old agency, Karmarama. Even more curiously, there was no mention at all of the fact that Ikea fired Karmarama last year. Needless to say, according to Ramchandani, "Ikea lost its voice" immediately thereafter.

SPITFIRE Ale is getting in to the World Cup spirit with a new press campaign to run throughout the tournament.

Back in December the FA asked England supporters to respect the host nation, Germany, and not sing songs about the war. A series of video messages from England stars including David Beckham, Frank Lampard and Wayne Rooney have duly been recorded to be played before kick off, urging fans to refrain in the interest of detente.

Enter Spitfire's campaign: a cartoon strip telling the story of an English footballer named Tommy, who triumphs over lily-livered Italians and a German super-sub called… Fritz. This on the back of posters which include directions to a pub that read "First left, then third reich."

TO mark the 10th anniversary of the Fashion Targets Breast Cancer campaign, David Bailey photographed ten different supermodels in their knickers, all sporting the campaign's gold t-shirts which are sold to the public.

One model, the *Eye* learns, was unstinting in putting on a good show for this excellent cause: Claudia Schiffer, whose "people" sent her shot back three times claiming her thighs looked too fat.

This altruism nearly caused the campaign to miss its already perilously tight production deadlines – but at least Claudia's thighs ended up looking all right.

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

DOING THE ROUNDS

"I HAD an allergic reaction, probably to nuts, and wanted to get to the bottom of it so I went to a company called Preventicum that offers state-of-the-art screening, including a full-body MRI scan."

So wrote Birmingham City's MD Karren (sic) Brady in the *Grauniad* under the snappy headline "I was terrified I could die any minute" (20 April). This unusual investigation for nut allergy certainly yielded results. "The next day I was at my desk when they called to say the radiologist had discovered a brain aneurysm – a potentially fatal weakening in a brain artery that could rupture at any time"

Ms Brady then paid to have her aneurysm clipped and, five and a half hours of risky neurosurgery later, she and the *Grauniad* concluded that her whole body scan had saved her life, a small price to pay for the £2,750 fee. But *Eye* reader and neurology registrar Dr Rustam Al-Shahi is not so sure. "The last thing Ms Brady needed was an MRI scan of her brain. Up to 1 in 20 adults have an unruptured aneurysm, only 1 in 15 of these aneurysms ever bleeds, and very few of the others cause any symptoms at all. Screening is sometimes undertaken when two or more first-degree relatives are affected by a bleed from a brain aneurysm in one family, but even then age and other illnesses may make screening inappropriate."

In a consumer society, anyone foolish and rich can have as many unnecessary and potentially harmful body scans as they like, but their uncritical endorsement in the press is lamentable. On 22 April, the *Times* ran an article entitled "Inside David Baddiel", a report on his freebie Preventicum scan. This only revealed that he was full of shit, a view that was endorsed by his conclusion: "Preventicum feels everyone should have one of these check ups every two years... I have no doubt that if you can afford it, it's a good thing to do."

Screening is only ever a good thing to do if you are trying to prevent a specific condition, and there is good trial evidence that testing will pick it up accurately, at an early, treatable stage, *and* improve the quality of your life or longevity. This does not exist for whole body MRI scans, and the risk of haemorrhage and stroke caused by Ms Brady's neurosurgery is significant.

Just as damaging is the stress and anxiety caused by identifying vast numbers of body wide shadows, cysts, spots and blips on increasingly detailed MRI and ultrasound scans. These are almost certainly of doubtful significance but you can never be completely sure, and many patients are left in limbo with no treatment offered to assuage the doubt that they might have cancer or there might be something wrong with their unborn baby. The best you can do is keep repeating the scans, which does little more than elevate the stress.

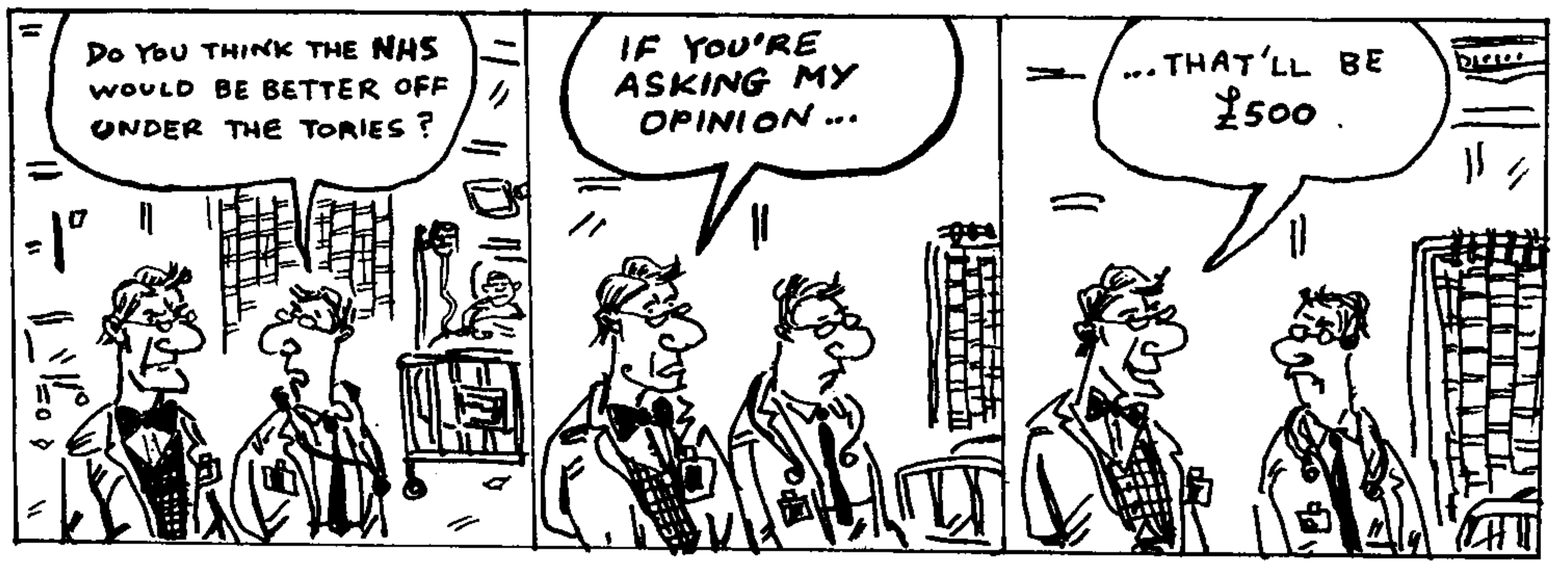
This epidemic of "innocent pathology" and "incidentalomas" led consultant neurosurgeon Richard Hayward to coin the acronym VOMIT (Victims of Modern Imaging Technology)[1]. But it applies to all investigations. The PSA test for prostate cancer is not very specific or sensitive, and the evidence that you live longer from treating the cancer is patchy at best. Many doctors refer to it as Promoting Stress and Anxiety. The media and internet does this best of all, with so much time now taken up with journalism induced angst that patients who are actually sick can't get seen. Time to launch CAMRA – the Campaign for Real Ailments.

[1] *BMJ* 2003; 326:1273

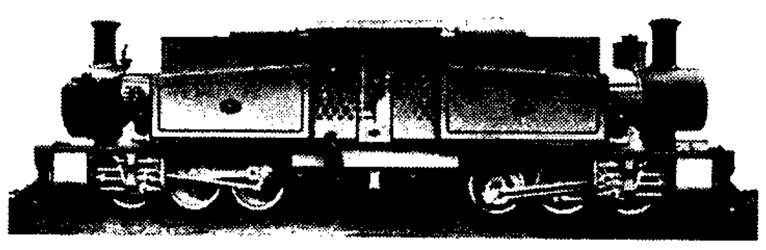
M.D.

off your trolley

REEVE & WAY



SIGNAL FAILURES



TRANSPORT for London has fallen into the trap of assuming there's a link between the private finance initiative and the public good.

It took Croydon Tramtrack, PFI operator of Croydon's trams, to the high court in a contractual dispute. Tramtrack's PFI deal lasts 99 years, and TfL wanted Tramtrack to plan for increased passengers. Tramtrack dusted down its contract – signed before TfL was set up – and the high court threw out TfL's "absurd" case. Maximising tram passengers would bring environmental and other benefits but Tramtrack's sole concern is profit, which could be dented if it brought in more trams and drivers.

TfL should have known it's absurd to expect a PFI contractor to do anything that was unforeseen when the contract was signed. When TfL proposed free tram travel for uniformed police support officers – to reassure Tramtrack customers and deter yobs from damaging Tramtrack property – Tramtrack demanded compensation because that wasn't in its contract.

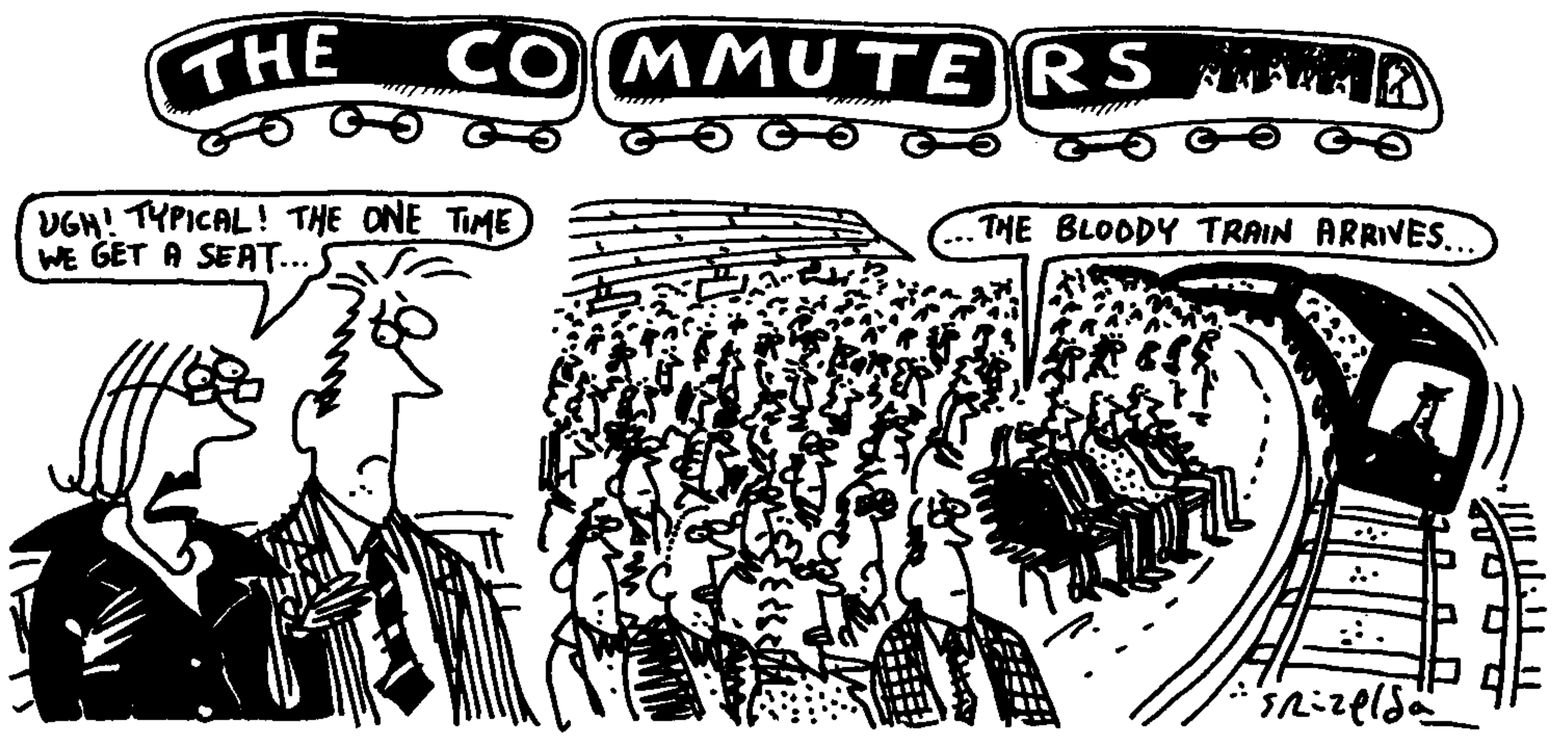
"New" Labour still insists on PFI for tram projects, and has blocked every English one because of high costs (see *Eyes passim*). PFI bidders inflate tram-scheme costs to reflect the risk of unregulated buses undermining tram investment, as in Sheffield where the trams carry half the number of passengers forecast. Nottingham avoided the problem because the city council still owns the local bus company, which runs the city's trams with a French partner. Buses complement trams instead of attacking them; after two years the trams carry 8 percent more passengers than forecast.

Success cuts no ice with the Department for Transport, however, which has sat on Nottingham's plans for two more tramlines for over two years. A freedom of information request shows the DfT isn't even attempting to argue those tramlines aren't worthwhile but is stalling with vague and infinite calls for more information. In August Transport Minister Derek Twigg wrote: "There is more work to be done on agreeing a robust and manageable procurement and funding approach." Six months later a DfT official said additional information was needed, particularly about "anticipated use of PFI credits", but once the information was received "the government will endeavour to reach a decision on granting programme entry as soon as possible".

How democracy works Pt 94

MPs and local government in Sheffield and other cities desperately want regulation of local buses because passenger numbers have fallen while London's buses, the only ones still regulated, thrive. But FirstGroup, National Express, Stagecoach and others continue pocketing big profits from unregulated buses.

The reason the political pressure has achieved nothing was revealed by Stephen Heard, who recently retired from bus trade body the Confederation of Passenger Transport. Technically, he didn't retire from the CPT but from the civil service. A former parliamentary private secretary, he was "seconded" for more than five years from the Department for Transport to help the CPT to lobby... the DfT. Heard says the CPT has outmanoeuvred its opponents (aka democratically elected representatives) to ensure buses remain unregulated. "Early day motions through backbenchers are wasted effort," he told *Coach and Bus Week* magazine. "It's not the way things are done any more... it's the equivalent of graffiti. Our way has been more subtle."



NETWORK Rail has refused to allow a TV company making a documentary about the Ladbroke Grove train crash, in which 31 people died, to film at Paddington station. Why? Because it would "glorify" rail accidents.

NR apparently also believes that the documentary planned for an American audience might put US tourists off using the rail network and so has tried to set itself up as a kind of censor – not appreciating that the film-makers will simply find their footage from somewhere.

'Dr B Ching'

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

AN INSPECTOR CALLS

SO SPOOKED by criticism was the Labour regime in Sunderland in the run-up to the council elections it turned to Inspector Knacker in an attempt to suppress dissent.

Eye 1157 reported how opponents of the council and its "registered social landlord", the Sunderland Housing Group (SHG), had received threatening letters from defamation lawyers Olswangs in a bid to flush out those behind a critical website (www.dadsplace.co.uk). Dadsplace publishes stories about the council and SHG that the *Sunderland Echo* will not touch, and is required reading locally, receiving between 3,000 and 4,000 hits a day. In recent weeks its pages on thieving union official and councillor David Allan (*Eyes* 1156 and 1157) and a "How To Vote" guide [ie Any Way But Labour] had put the wind up the People's Party.

Following a complaint from Sunderland council's chief executive and returning officer, Ged Fitzgerald, at 7.45am on Thursday 27 April, Andrew Foster, a 35-year-old psychiatric nursing assistant, was arrested at his home by six detectives who said they wanted to talk to him about suspected offences under the Representation of the People Act 1983. Foster was taken to the city's main police station, where he was held for most of the morning. He was not charged.

Foster's only connection with dadsplace is that, nearly three years ago, he registered the domain name on behalf of an acquaintance. Foster has never authored material on the site, nor had any further connection with it. Police still removed all his computer equipment. Their questions concentrated on matters Foster knew nothing about, such as how dadsplace might be funded. It would be illegal for a political party to secretly fund such a website.

Labour party members have recently attempted to smear dadsplace by suggesting it is a front for the BNP – no more true than an earlier accusation that it was a cover for the Lib Dems! Another possible offence would be the publication of untrue statements about candidates. If statements are true, however, publication is not an offence – so dadsplace would seem to be in the clear as far as Cllr Allan is concerned.

PS: While Knacker is prepared to send six officers on an early morning raid to put the frighteners on a man with only the most tenuous connection to dadsplace, he has not yet had time to interview Cllr Allan about the Curious Case of the Missing Amicus Subscriptions (*Eye* 1156).

● NOTHING'S harder than parting a councillor from his or her beloved allowances, as Cardiff's district auditor Janet Jones has discovered. Following an investigation by her department, in 2004 Mrs Jones reached a settlement with the council over the repayment of more than £152,000 unlawfully paid to 34 current and former councillors as "special responsibility" allowances during the regime of former Labour leader Russell Goodway (who became known as "Goodwage" after his own allowances reached £58,500 in 1999). The settlement came two weeks before a high court case was due to start. A year-and-a-half later, however, not a penny has been repaid, and Mrs Jones has returned to m'learned friends in an attempt to prise the taxpayers' missing money from the members' sweaty mitts.

ILL WIND

TORY leader David Cameron has submitted a planning application to Kensington and Chelsea council for the small wind turbine that, it has been reported, he wishes to erect on the roof of his Notting Hill home.

Alas the blue chameleon's attempt to go green may end up with red faces all round. Mr Cameron does not appear to have checked K&C's unitary development plan before telling the world about his scheme. Had he done so, he would have found that wind turbines atop west London's elegant terraces are strictly verboten in the flagship Tory borough!

CAYMAN CROCODILES

HACKNEY council's finances were always a bit of a joke: in the late 1990s the council admitted owing £17m. Things stopped being funny in 2001 when the district auditor discovered that the council was adrift not 17, but 72, million squids (*Eyes passim*). The government sent in administrators to run many services but refused to bail out the authority.

The time had come to flog off the family silver, in the form of millions of pounds-worth of council property. Traders who had been leaseholders of the council, some for more than 30 years, were given 28 days notice that their premises were to be sold by private auctioneers.

Rows of shops have since been sold at knock-down prices to developers, many of whom operate from tax havens in the Bahamas and Cayman Islands. Traders were not allowed to bid for individual lots.

In Dalston Lane, 14 properties were sold to a South-African/Dubai conglomerate for £1.8m, despite the fact that the occupiers had been prepared to buy the freeholds for up to £300,000 each. For 31 years Tony Platia ran Francesca's Café in Broadway Market. He was told he would be given first refusal if it was sold. But the council sold the caff to Roger Wratten, a Kent-based millionaire property developer. Spirit Grant, Rastafarian owner of the Nutritious Food Gallery, put down a 10 percent, £10,000 deposit on his property and was assured it would be his, only to see it sold at auction for just £85,000 to another Nassau-based developer.

In all properties with a market value of up to £225m have been sold for around £70m. What a deal!

● GOOD NEWS for Pembrokeshire County Council, which has received a "communication regarding financial statements" from district auditor Geraint Norman. Auditors are required to report "unadjusted mis-statements" (ie cock-ups in the accounts), he writes, "other than those of a clearly trifling nature". Mr Norman explains that "a trifling error is an entirely inconsequential error". In Pembrokeshire, he goes on, "we have set the trifling limit for the council at £100,000." Cheers! Treble sherry trifles all round!

I-SPY

Lingfield, Surrey

Submitted by Garry Taylor.

£10 paid for similar submissions.

(SAE required for return of photographs)

LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELDS

PROF Colin Waine, chairman of the National Obesity Forum, is the latest to point to "increased inactivity" as the reason one third of children are overweight, according to public health figures released last month, sparking the usual government promises of investment in sport.

So what's been going on around the country?

In Paisley, Scotland, the council has agreed to flog Millarston playing fields plus a running track and other land at the Seedhill playing fields to housing developers.

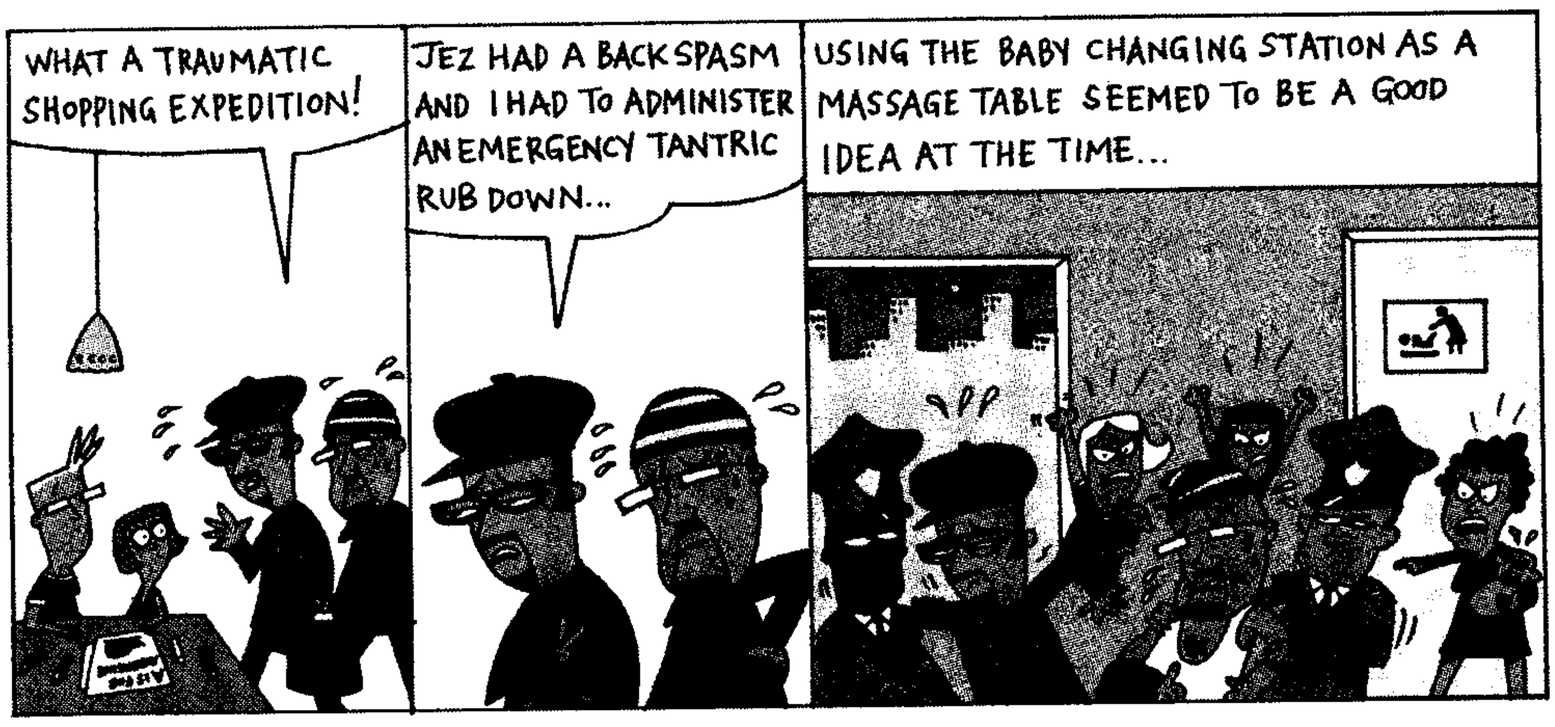
The 11 acres of green space, both sites with sports pitches marked out, are to be sold to fund a £1.5m scheme to "improve sports facilities". In fact, much of the money is earmarked to restore the listed pavilion at the playing fields in the Penilee suburb of Glasgow. Very nice, but not doing much for kids' fitness in Millarston.

Meanwhile in Bristol, the Whitehall Playing Fields (known locally as Packer's Field) are to be sacrificed to Whitehall's beloved City Academies project, as extra facilities for the Bristol City Academy are slated to be built there this summer.

But the loss of outdoor activity space isn't the only thing bothering locals. Beneath that area of Bristol are old coal mine workings. The planning permission documents for the school state that "there are no recorded shafts within the site", but many people *remember* the shaft that opened up on the site in the 1990s. A picture of the hole even features in a book about the city's mining history. Locals have written to the Health and Safety Executive to try to get any plans involving heavy machinery suspended.

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

KNIFE & PACKER


WHAT A TRAUMATIC SHOPPING EXPEDITION!
JEZ HAD A BACK SPASM AND I HAD TO ADMINISTER AN EMERGENCY TANTRIC RUB DOWN...
USING THE BABY CHANGING STATION AS A MASSAGE TABLE SEEMED TO BE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME...

LIBRARY NEWS

REMEMBER assistant Birmingham libraries chief John Dolan who oversaw the failed £147m central library project?

Off he went in October to become Library Champion at the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (Eyes passim). Last month he was interviewed by *The Bookseller*, telling them that his "keywords" are "range, relevance and currency." Eh?

Dolan also grabbed the opportunity to take a few pot shots at those book lovers who "pontificate" about libraries, saying they don't know as much as library users (as if they were not the same people). He concludes that "a library is not a bookshop" and that any argument to the contrary "is based on the erroneous notion that a library's main purpose is to house and stamp out books".

One presumes he didn't notice the double entendre...

NOOKS and CORNERS

MORE depressing news from Liverpool, whose politicians and property developers continue to revel in the city's fate as European City of Culture in 2008.

Although the Heritage Lottery Fund sensibly turned down a bid for £11.4m to pay for the interior of the new Museum of Liverpool, the Northwest Regional Development Agency has now offered £32.7m of public money to pay for this dubious project (*Eye* 1154).

This is the "iconic X-shaped museum building" designed by Kim Nielsen and resembling a squashed shoe-box on stilts which is to spoil Pierhead by standing between the "Three Graces" and the Albert Dock. It is a project enthusiastically supported by the politicians rather than the people of Liverpool, naively believing that every city can enjoy a Bilbao Effect by having a mis-shaped "iconic" masterpiece by a fashionable foreigner.

For David Fleming, director of National Museums Liverpool, it will be "the city's first 21st-century masterpiece… the first beautiful building since the Catholic cathedral" – a curiously double-edged compliment when you consider the appearance and history of Paddy's Wigwam.

However, it is about another smaller but more beautiful Roman Catholic church that I write (again) this week. St Mary of the Angels, Fox Street, Everton was closed in 2001 – one of the many churches ruthlessly culled by the archdiocese of Liverpool (*Eye* 1124). Designed by Pugin & Pugin in the Early Christian style and consecrated in 1910, it was run by the Franciscans and paid for and endowed by the adopted daughter and heiress of William Imrie of the White Star shipping line. Amy Elizabeth Imrie, who gave away all her money and eventually became a nun, paid to have the church filled with altars and works of art from Italy "to give the people of Liverpool, who cannot go abroad, some idea of what the churches of Rome are like".

Such altruism does not impress Patrick Kelly, Archbishop of Liverpool, who was also determined to demolish the church even though it had a loyal congregation and, thanks to Amy Imrie's endowment, paid its way. He was, however, thwarted: by English Heritage, who said there was no other RC church in the country "with such a wealth of Italian Baroque carvings and works of art" and recommended the church be listed grade II; and by the vigorous campaigning of the Friends of St Mary of the Angels.

Nevertheless, this progressive cleric made sure the church was stripped out, the works of art ostensibly going into store, and installed the Whitechapel Project for the homeless in the Friary House, who then chopped down the trees in Elizabeth Imrie's garden and who have refused to move out despite the fact their planning permission expired in October 2005 – a condition confirmed after appeal by the government's planning inspectorate.

Now the offensive notion of St Mary of the Angels reopening as a place of worship (three offers to buy the church for that purpose have been rejected) has been circumvented by a plan to lease the building to the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic as a practice hall, until a purpose-built auditorium is completed next to the Philharmonic Hall in Hope Street in six years' time. This is, of course, a perfectly good use for a redundant church, except that Liverpool is full of empty churches. Indeed, St Mary's, Highfield Street, a big and good 1950s city-centre building replacing a church by Pugin destroyed in the Second World War, would have been admirable for the purpose, but the archdiocese chose to bulldoze it instead.

The sad thing is that the occupation of St Mary of the Angels by the Liverpool Philharmonic will prevent the Friends opening the church to the public during the year of culture in 2008 when the city will, presumably, be full of visitors who might be interested to see some of the Italian treasures bought by Amy Imrie for Liverpool as well as a building connected to the White Star Line and, thus (if indirectly) the *Titanic*.

At a heated meeting of Liverpool's planning committee last month, planning permission was granted for this change of use. But when the chair of the committee, Lady Doreen Jones, twice asked what had happened to the artefacts in the church since the last site visit, representatives of the archdiocese were unable to give a satisfactory answer.

ANOTHER redundant listed church in danger is the former Lauriston United Presbyterian Church in Edinburgh. This Gothic Revival building, dating from 1859, in Lauriston Place was sold in 1982 for £35,000 by the Church of Scotland to two individuals, Messrs Ballali and Abdel-Aal, representing the Arab Social League of Edinburgh. The intention was to convert the building into a youth centre, but there seemed to be insufficient funds to maintain the building, let alone carry out any work.

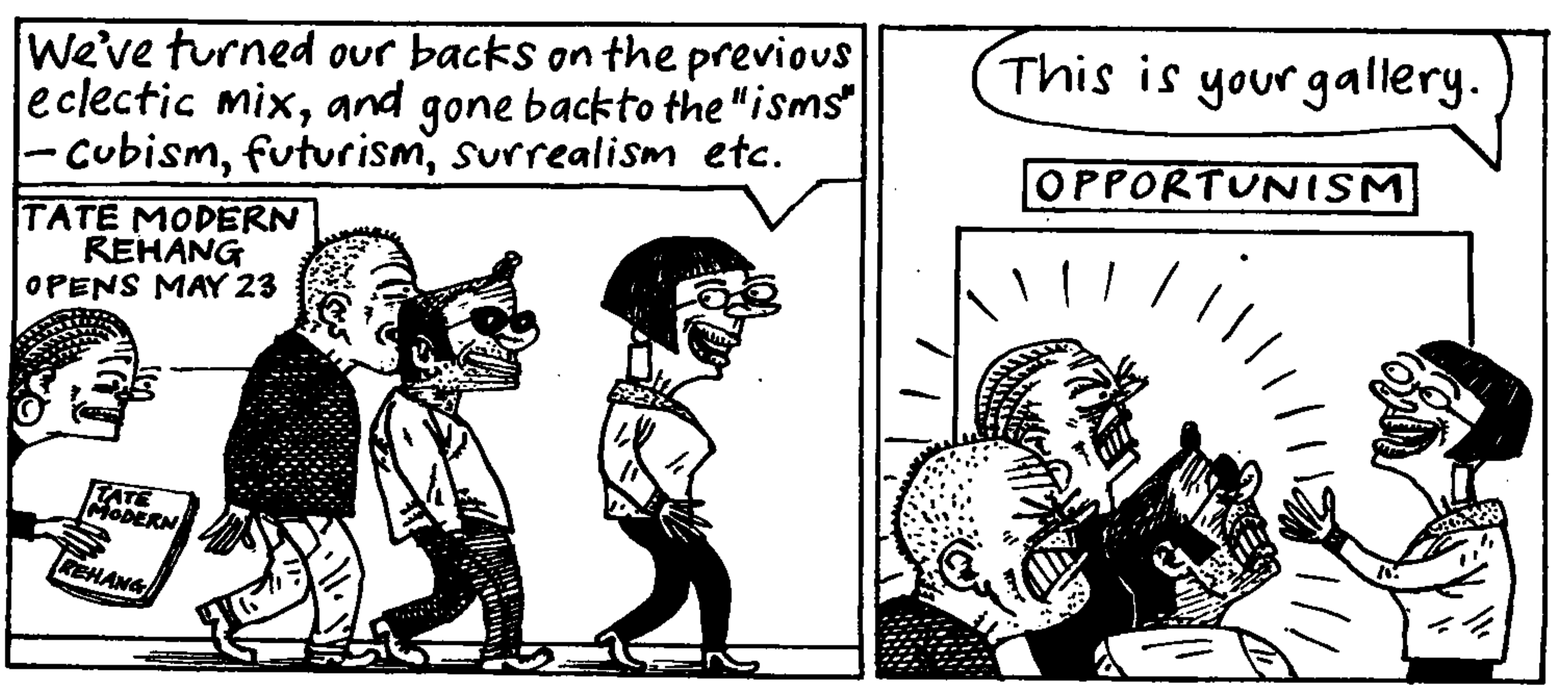
In 2000 the Lauriston Church Preservation Group was formed by local residents alarmed at its deteriorating condition. In 2001, after being used as a refuge for Muslim families, the building was badly damaged by a fire which the police treated as suspicious. A repairs notice was served – in vain. The derelict church is now on the Buildings at Risk Register maintained for Historic Scotland by the Scottish Civic Trust and there is vague talk of it being sold to a developer.

The address of the Arab Social League of Edinburgh is given as c/o. The Muslim Council of Britain in London. Such irresponsible treatment of historic buildings does not help in furthering good community relations.

'Piloti'

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH


We've turned our backs on the previous eclectic mix, and gone back to the "isms" – cubism, futurism, surrealism etc.
TATE MODERN REHANG OPENS MAY 23
TATE MODERN REHANG
This is your gallery.
OPPORTUNISM

Letters

Private Eye

Lookalike

Prescott Everglot

Sir,

"Two Shags" Prescott and Finnis Everglot – one, father of the Corpse Bride; the other, father of another episode in the Labour landslide into sleeze. But who could have spawned these two? We must be told.

STEPHEN CARR,
Harborne, Birmingham.

Hewitt and cry

Sir,

I have read the Eye for 25 years and will not be cancelling my subscription in protest over Patricia Hewitt cover (1157).

However, I should warn the Eye that mocking the mentally afflicted is very unkind. On this occasion, however, I'm sure most of my profession will let it go.

SIMON COLE ,MD, FRCS, FRCSEd,
Via email.

May contain nuts

Sir,

"BNP wins seats in Barking." Need we say more?

GEOF COLLYER,
Farningham, Kent.

Not clever or funny

Sir,

I wish to complain in the strongest possible terms about your reproduction of the election leaflet in issue 1157. Just because the BNP candidate had a name, Ralph Nutter, which a few people might find amusing is no reason to include it in your magazine. Many people have names which some might consider silly.

Publishing such names in a magazine is puerile and stupid.

Yours faithfully,
IVA BIGGAN,
Canada.

Party gatecrasher

Sir,

As parliamentary representative of the Tory dwellers of Tunbridge Wells and a former Director of Conservative Policy, Dr Greg Clark may justifiably be miffed at being referred to as "Labour MP Greg Clark" in your last edition (Eye 1157).

Colour-blindness is a legitimate excuse for failing to spot a chameleon, but this is just preposterous, etc.

Yours,
TROUBLED OF TUNBRIDGE WELLS,

Via email.

Right out of ordure

Sir,

I note with interest your reference to me in issue 1156, page 8 – Called to Ordure. Thanks for thinking of me but I wasn't at the event.

Yours faithfully,
JO GIBBONS,

10 Downing Street, SW1.

Accounting for taste

Sir,

"Gavel Basher" seems to be unaware of the one critical exception of ministerial accountability (Called To Ordure, Eye 1157). For centuries we have quite sensibly not trusted politicians with public money – for reasons precisely like the one discussed in the article (contract awards being influenced by party donations). Accounting officers are civil servants (usually permanent secretaries) who are directly accountable to parliament for the spending of taxpayers' money. This is why the Commons' public accounts committee spends so much of its time beating up mandarins rather than ministers – the latter make the policy decisions, but the mandarins actually sign the cheques. So Alex Allan was technically correct when he said that civil servants always take the decisions (about spending money). Of course, this is a democracy, and we can't have unelected bureaucrats overruling elected representatives. So when the minister and the accounting officer disagree about the best value for public money (say, in a contract award decision), the mandarin can suggest that the minister writes a letter explaining why ministerial policy requires funds to be spent in a manner contrary to the accounting officer's advice. Then the minister gets his way and the mandarin has the letter to wave at the PAC – but Allan's statement is still technically correct.

CHRIS CARR,

London SE25.

PS: Guess who drafts the letter?

"Remember, if you get your pin number wrong three times, your face will stay like that for ever"

Robson's choice

Sir,

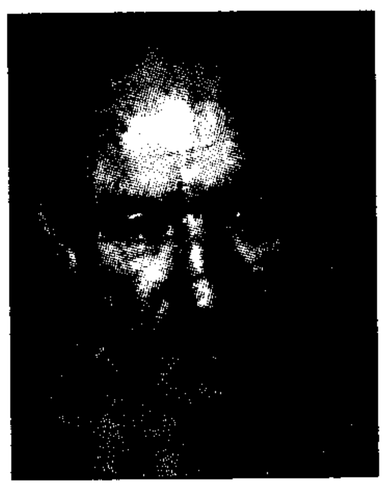
Even as a Chelsea fan it is hard not to agree with the sentiments about the state of Chelsea FC's PR (Eye 1156). Your comments though about the "niggly match against West Bromwich Albion" were perhaps not as balanced as they might have been. I watched the match on Sky, and was struck by the fact that Bryan Robson appeared to be shouting at Mourinho as he emerged from the tunnel after half time. I'm no lip reader, but one might have been forgiven for thinking that Bryan Robson was repeatedly calling him a "fucking faggot". Presumably, the "usual histrionics from Mourinho" to which you refer were due to the same unfortunate misunderstanding on the part of Jose.

Can't understand then why there was no "traditional" handshake or glass of wine after the game.

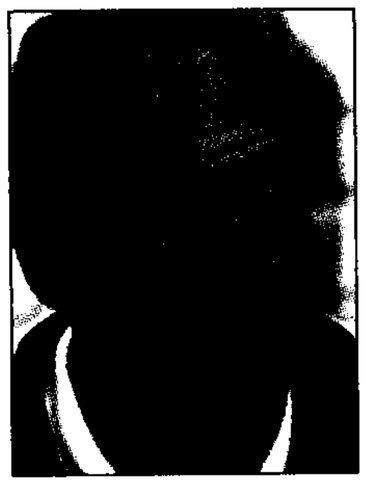
Yours faithfully,
IAN BARKER,

Holwell, Herts.

Lookalike



Scolari



Hackman

Sir,

I hear that Gene Hackman has been offered the England manager job whereas Luis Felipe Scolari (former Brazil manager) has been offered several big Hollywood film roles. What's going on?

BEN ATTENBOROUGH,

Halstead, Essex.

Own goal

Sir,

I must say that for once Graham Taylor was talking some sense in his Radio 5 Live football commentary when warning about concentrating when neither team has possession, and was thus harshly treated in being judged worthy of a Colemanballs entry (Eye 1157). As around 25-30 minutes of every 90-minute match involves the ball being "dead", it is fair comment to warn against the lapses of concentration which can lead to quickly taken free-kicks and throw-ins resulting in goals conceded. However, I'm sure Mr Taylor will have committed at least three unpunished Colemanballs in each match commentary since then, so it all balances out. Do I steal Ashley Boroda's £10 with a stoppage-time winner?

Yours,
JOHN BREEZE,

Sheffield.

What fools!

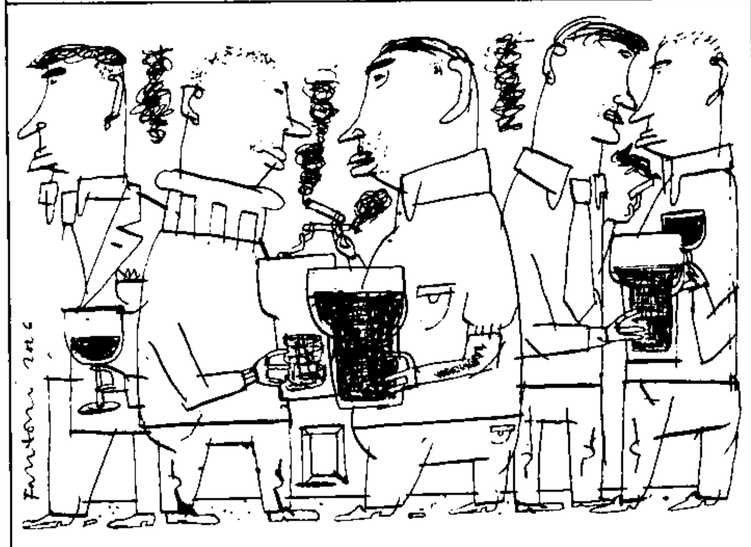
Sir,

Re: the Cameron/Martin friendship piece from the Guardian in Pseuds Corner (Eye 1157). Didn't anyone notice the very early April date or the anagrammatic byline Olaf Priol? Guys, you've been had!

Yours,
PETER WHITE,

Via email.

Scenes You Seldom See



"The bar's really crowded. Let's move away so other people can get served"

Merc perk

Sir,

Re "A Doctor Writes", Eye 1157. Our medical practitioner might be offered a new Mercedes, but he would not receive "a beautiful new 5-series"... that would be a BMW.

Vorsprung Durch Pedantik.

Best wishes,
CHRI MACLEOD,

Via email.

Hall(e) of Fame

Sir,

Lunchtime O'Boulez (Eye 1157) confuses Manchester with a small town in Germany. The band beloved of all musical Mancunians is the Hallé Orchestra, named for its founder, Sir Charles Hallé (sure he was actually born "Halle"; but that need not concern us now). The "Halle Orchestra" is something – and somewhere – else.

Yours acutely,
DR BARRA CHAIM,

Wanstead Park, Essex.

*PS: OK, cuddly countertenor David James was frogmarched on to a 747 – but he **had** just told US customs he didn't know what was in a packet that was in his luggage (I know, because they were motorcycle mags for my brother-in-law: sorry, David).*

Organ donor

Sir,

Ian Hockley (Letters, 1157) ably highlights the DTI's attempts to boost the job market for the venerable but endangered occupation of pipe-organ hand-pumpers. For reasons I cannot now explain, I was on a Brains Trust at the Royal College of Organists in the early 1980s and the subject of "authentic" (non-electrical) blowers and their operators came up. The panel's organ-builder eloquently lamented the profession's decline with the unassailable observation that "Time was, of course, when you could get a boy in off the street and he'd blow you for an hour for half-a-crown". There wasn't a dry trouser in the house.

Yours manually,
RICHARD ABRAM,

Via email.

LUVVIES

"It felt like our brains were connected by a blistering hot wire."

JOHNNY DEPP explains his special relationship with Tim Burton, *Guardian*

Submitted by Mark Samuel.

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

SOLUTIONS

"Alternative Sitting provides ergonomic furniture solutions which minimise the postural strain associated with sitting." – *chairs*

"Christ Apostolic Church: The Solution Centre" – *church*

"Chicago Town Wedges are an ideal hot snack solution to serve with drinks" – *potato wedges*

"Post Office Mailing Solutions" – *brown paper*

"BAE Systems: Integrated Battlefield Solutions" – *tanks*

All submitted by readers

Slav to pedantry

Sir,

Being not only a pedant but also a Slav (non-Serbian variety), I feel compelled to register my mild amazement at Iain Holms's claim (Kosova v. Kosovo, Eye 1157) that "some Kosova Albanians" feel offended by the use of the Serbian form "Kosovo". Although in these matters feeling offended is de rigueur for all participants, the Albanians are slightly less entitled to wounded feelings, since the word is of Serbian origin, ***kos*** *being* ***thrush*** *(the feathered kind), and* ***Kosovo Polje*** *(the traditional full name) meaning* ***Thrush Field****.*

Beware of bird flu.

Yours,
JÁN VILIKOVSKÝ,

Via email.

PS: The Germans – more pedantic, less Slavic – call the place ***Amselfeld****. Go take a look in the Duden.*

"I think our daughter's started to self harm"

Lost in translation

Sir,

I was pleased to see Private Eye taking some notice of foreign literature by reviewing Andrei Makine's "The Woman Who Waited". However, I was disappointed that there was no mention of the translator, Geoffrey Strachan. Books don't translate themselves, you know, and it's only polite to acknowledge the person who re-wrote the book for an English-speaking audience.

Yours,
SUSAN PICKFORD,

Via email.

Eastern premise

Sir,

Paul Blezard (Eye 1157) is right to point out that Japan is home to quite liberal (and bonkers) attitudes in sexual preference and fetishism, but to the best of my knowledge the practice of selling used underwear belonging to minors is no longer legal, or commonplace. Hunting for such a vending machine would turn up only new undergarments for sale to men and women who have stayed out all night, and would consequently lead to disappointment. Er... I would imagine.

Yours unabashed at my debut,
BARRY J. MORGAN,

Via email.

Grumpy Old Morris Men

Tunnel vision

Sir,

How could you describe Rachel Corrie as a "Peace Activist" in issue 1157? She was killed whilst attempting to block an IDF bulldozer which was trying to uncover tunnels used by Hamas to smuggle weapons. But I suppose the image of a white blonde American being killed by the big, bad Jew is always going to be a lot more appealing than the truth.

Other than that, you do a wonderful job. Ignore the old fart in your last issue who wanted you to change your magazine to make it more "Yoof" friendly. I'm 22 and have been an avid reader for nearly five years. It's a magazine, not a fashion statement.

NATALIE SMITH,

Hitchin, Herts.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"I can assure West Ham fans that no stone will be unearthed in our preparation for next week."

ALAN PARDEW, BBC1
(Ian Scott)

"I want to finish as high as we can, and I think that's possible."

DAVID O'LEARY, BBC1
(James Brilliant)

"They [Everton FC] are really missing the loss of Arteta. It's sticking out like a sore throat."

RONNIE GOODLASS, BBC Radio Merseyside
(Trish Dowling)

"How things have changed [at Torquay United] in the last two years. Mike Bateson was the chairman then... and he's still the chairman now."

HAMISH MARSHALL, BBC Spotlight Sport
(Ian Douglas-Walker)

"This is a viper's nest waiting to be unfurled..."

JONATHAN AGNEW, Radio 5 Live
(Matthew Minter)

Interactive-Style Youth Feedback Column

Sir,

In response to Tessa Bennett's letter featured in Eye 1157, I would like to say that I, as a young person, do not have a single politically inclined friend who does **not** *read and enjoy Private Eye. It is neither boring nor lightweight and trivial, two criticisms which in fact sound a little bit contradictory. If your correspondent had read past page one, she would have spotted that Blair and the gang get considerably more coverage than Boris, and indeed that the Eye scrutinises them more closely than most other major journals. Don't ever change...*

RUPERT CULLEN.

...I couldn't disagree more with Tessa Bennett's letter in Eye 1157 that Private Eye needs a shake-up and that young people are being put off by its current style. If I'm reading right, she's saying that there needs to be a weekly with less copy (a clever way of saying "less content") to attract new readers.

I'm 17 and have been reading the Eye since I was 13, so I presume I'm one of the "young, politically-minded people" she talks about. It doesn't take a genius to realise that to get to the political/scurrilous content you have to actually open the magazine...

JOE BALDWIN

...According to Tessa Bennett, "people need facts, facts and more facts put together... in a modern style," and the young politically-minded "would not dream of buying" the Eye.

I have to say that the Eye wonderfully fulfils a role in my life of actually making me appear politically minded, when I really just buy it for the cartoons and Colemanballs. Keep up the bloody good work...

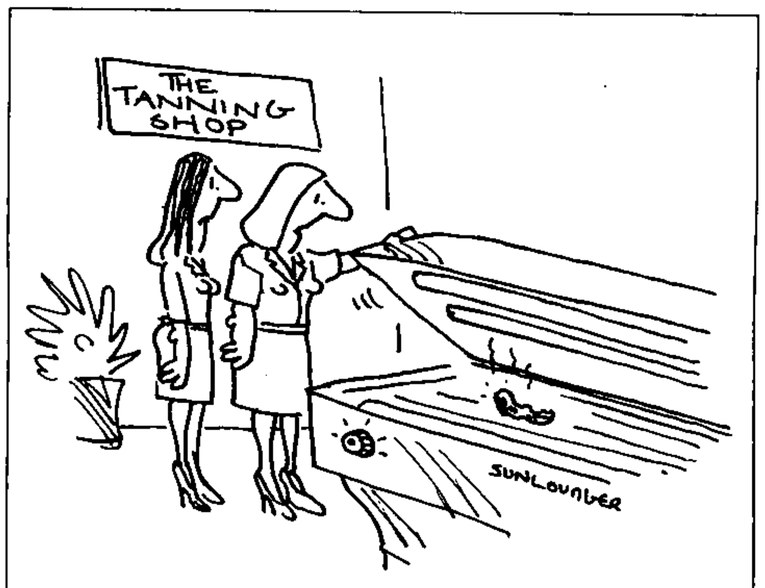
KEIR SHIELS.

...With regard to Ms Tessa Bennett's letter in Eye 1157, I feel obliged to point out that, at age 21, I have been reading Private Eye for several years already and have many friends who do the same. But I would never dream of buying the Eye purely on the basis of the ***extremely serious*** *issues that it covers! Surely the best part of the publication is the sheer genius of the humour. Indeed, my friends and I will often skip over some of the more dreary rantings about old buildings, decaying hospitals, rural bus routes, and the like.*

Perhaps, though, the Eye is itself pursuing a very clever strategy to attract readers? You lure us in when we're young with your funny jokes, and then, around the time that we start to get old and grumpy (and liable to be offended by aforementioned jokes), you keep us hooked with your grumblings about how the world is going downhill.

I must say that it is most ingenious. Perhaps you have a photograph of a similar juxtaposition of the old and the young brought together in reasonably harmonious union?...

NATHANIEL KENT.



"It's your job to keep your eye on the customers"

Letter from **Toronto**
from Our Own Correspondent

OUR political life was transformed earlier this year when the Liberals, the natural party of government, lost the election and the Conservatives came to power. The losers went into a tailspin, apparently surprised that they are hated by half the country and that their party is also several million dollars in debt.

A bright knight on a white horse, or any horse, was needed. And who better to mount up and lead the charge than Michael Ignatieff? The same Michael Ignatieff you in Britain may recall as a dreary intellectual and arts bore – and who, more than 10 years ago, the *Eye* predicted, had ambitions to lead the Liberal Party and become Canadian prime minister (he denied this strenuously at the time).

Lo and behold, Ignatieff is now an MP and running to be Liberal leader. It's not going to be easy, however, and the saviour in waiting has had a pretty rough time already. For someone who preaches the merits of democracy Ignatieff benefited from a profoundly un-democratic process. He was parachuted into a safe seat in Toronto, with the backing of party bigwigs but to the chagrin of local Liberals. Several rivals were literally locked out of meetings. They then pounded on the windows and tried to force open the doors of party headquarters as their fate and that of the constituency was decided without them.

Activists were particularly angry because this area in West Toronto has a large Ukrainian community and Ignatieff is proud and somewhat ostentatious about his aristocratic Russian lineage. Certain nasty comments made by the new candidate about Ukrainian dancing and baggy shirts were found, published and widely distributed.

But worse was to come. We Canadians are no friends of the United States, especially when it comes to foreign policy. One Liberal MP referred publicly last year to Bush and his people as "bastards." Professor Ignatieff, however, had written about how he supported the war in Iraq and even thought torture might be acceptable.

He went into virtual seclusion, and for the first time in his career refused to speak to journalists and declined TV interviews. One interview he did give was to the university magazine at Harvard, where until recently he was a professor. The great Canadian patriot told his American friends that if he lost the seat he would immediately return to the US.

So what's new? As was pointed out by his opponents, he hadn't lived in Canada for 25 years and his commitment to the country might just be a little questionable. Ignatieff, they claimed, was not running to be an MP but a PM. No backbench banalities for the Russian prince but a rapid transformation into the new Pierre Trudeau was what he was after, they said.

He managed to reduce the Liberal majority in the constituency by thousands of votes; but he still might just make it as leader because of the pisspoor other candidates. What is known as the A Team of possible leaders, former senior cabinet ministers and ambassadors, are not running this time, convinced the Tories will win the next election. Instead Ignatieff is competing against various turncoats and mediocrities.

One, Scott Brison, is a former Conservative who parades his male lover around Ottawa and who leaked government information to a man he met at a Rolling Stones concert. Another, who retired from the race early on, was Belinda Stronach, a former Tory and daughter of a multi-millionaire. She has yet to learn French in our aggressively bi-lingual country and is known as Barbie. A third, Bob Rae, was a socialist premier of Ontario and is arguably the least popular politician in the entire country.

Compared to this lot Ignatieff probably does look like Trudeau. But if he doesn't win, get his Harvard office ready and put on the family samovar. He'll no doubt be heading home.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

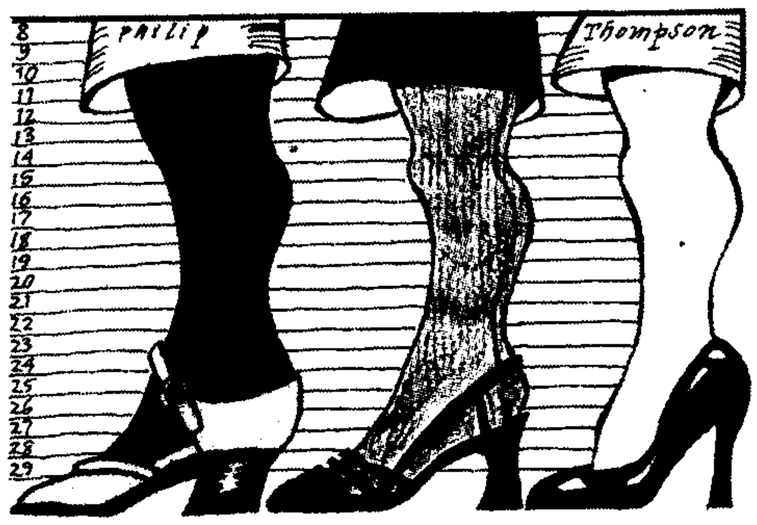
● "Mitchell Rupe died peacefully in Washington State Penitentiary, aged fifty-one," his lawyer Roger Hunko told reporters in Spokane. "He'd been suffering from hepatitis C and cirrhosis for several years, so his death was not unexpected. He was a very intelligent individual, always the gentleman, and apart from the two murders, he lived an exemplary life. But I guess he'll always be remembered as the only inmate on Death Row who was ever deemed too obese to hang."

Hunko then recalled how Rupe had shot and killed two Olympia bank tellers during a bungled robbery in 1981. "A jury found him guilty of murder and sentenced him to death by hanging, but Rupe appealed, on grounds of his weight. He weighed 410 pounds, and claimed that hanging him would constitute cruel and unusual punishment, because of the probability of decapitation. The federal court agreed, and because hanging was Washington's only method of execution at the time, he got a life sentence by default. In 2000, after his liver disease began, his weight dropped to 270 pounds and prosecutors tried again for the death penalty, but the Thurston County jury deadlocked at 11-1, just shy of the unanimous vote required for capital punishment. So after that, the authorities just had to wait for nature to carry out his death sentence instead." *(San Diego Union-Tribune, 8/2/06. Spotter: Wallace Brown)*

– ● –

● *"There's no ulterior motive behind this scheme," Huang Wen of the Century Amusement Park told a press conference in Zhengzhou city. "It's just a novel way to attract tourists. We want more people to visit our park this summer, but the entrance price of 80 yuan is too expensive for many women in low-paid jobs. However, men like seeing women who show off their legs, so we came up with the idea of reducing the admission price for girls, according to how short their miniskirt is. From July 1st to August 31st, we'll let them in for half price if their skirts are shorter than 14 inches, and they have bare legs. If it's shorter than 10 inches, they can get in for free."*

Huang was defending the park's promotional miniskirt scheme, which has caused outrage amongst traditional Chinese people. "We have two female personnel standing at the ticket windows with rulers, to determine whether the length of the skirt earns a discount, and sometimes I go along too, to help with the measuring. China is changing, and it is common now for women's bodies to be used for publicity. In Chengdu city recently, a soap manufacturer

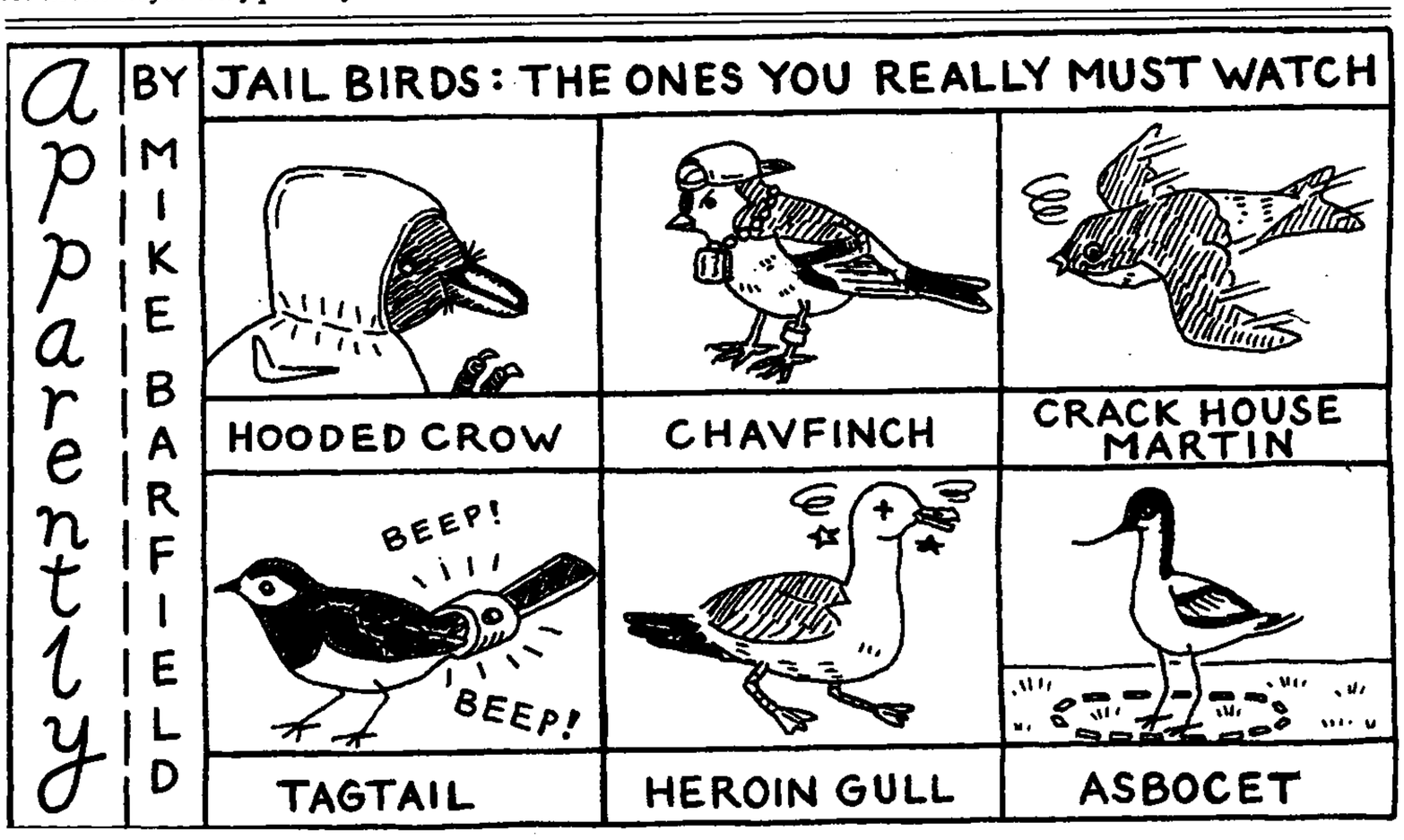


hired naked women to bath in shop windows. So what's wrong with us encouraging girls to wear very short skirts?" (The Epoch Times, 7/705. Spotter: Adrian G Stewart)

– ● –

● "I cried openly when I heard about my own death," twenty-eight-year-old Sakhumzi Pinn told reporters in Motherwell, Port Elizabeth, "and I wept again when I saw my own grave. I do not know who is buried there, but it is not me, yet all my friends and neighbours insist that it is. They think I am a ghost, and try to attack me, and I have had to flee from my house in Mgwangqa Street, for my own safety.

"There has been a terrible misunderstanding. Last May, I left home after a heated argument, and was arrested for housebreaking soon after. I was too ashamed to tell anyone that I'd been sent to prison, so I did my time and was released in January. In the meantime, there was a gruesome car accident in Motherwell, in which the driver's face was damaged beyond recognition, and the police thought the body might be mine. My aunt Regina Mpongoshe was called to the Gelvandale mortuary, identified the body, and it was buried as me. Now, my life has become impossible. My mother has my death certificate, all my official papers have been cancelled, and if I go anywhere where people know me, they call me zombie and try to kill me. Sometimes, I wish I was dead." *(The Herald [South Africa], 15/2/06. Spotter: Ann Nel)*



ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo!

And I'm still here, whatever silly letters are sent and however many loonies are wandering about with placards saying "The End Is Nigh". Well, it isn't. And I'm not going anywhere (just in case our friend from Tesco thinks he can get rid of me by voting for the BNP in the PCC elections!).

And what a lot of nonsense we've been hearing in the past few days about "meltdown", "catastrophe" and it being time for me to go! As I said, I'm *not* going, but what I am doing is bringing some new faces into the PCC to give it a fresh appeal and saying goodbye to a few old friends who have come to the end of their service.

Like Mr Clarke of the Neighbourhood Watch. I know I said last week that he was "indispensable" and had "my full support", but, hey! – even vicars can make mistakes, although I didn't in this case and I've decided to let him go! It's what we call "tough love". So, however much we *love* Charles, we can't have foreign rapists and paedophiles roaming around the churchyard at all hours of the day and night.

So, *vale* (that means "you're fired" in Latin) to Charles and *salve* ("you're hired") to Dr Reid. Dr Reid is a familiar face around the parish and has done most of the jobs in the PCC (!!). To each of them he has brought his own style of no-nonsense Scottish brutality *(Is this right? D.H.).*

But let's not dwell on these minor matters. Surely it's time that we tried to get all this into some kind of perspective? I mean, can we look at the bigger picture?

OK. So the last nine days in the parish have seen a few blips. But, hang on guys, what about the last nine years?

That's three-hundred-and-sixty-five times more blipless days than the number of days when we had blips! And just think what we have achieved in those last nine years!

A Tesco in every street (sometimes even two!). A hospital within 50 miles of where you live that's open for 24 hours a week – every week!

Class sizes at our new Kwikfit Beacon Academy (formerly the Shirley Williams Comprehensive) down to 50 from 20 only a few years ago. Impressive, eh?

And as for all the tittle-tattle about John, I am not going to dignify it with a mention in this newsletter!

What Mr Prescott does in his public life is entirely a matter for him, and it's none of our business what he does in the privacy of his own office!

I feel sorry for all those people in the parish who've got nothing more important to occupy their thoughts than this kind of trivial and prurient gossip!

That's why I've written a new chorus for this week's Evensong, which I want everyone to learn by heart.

"Nine years have seen the glory of the coming of myself" (Repeat)

(To the tune of The Battle Bus of the Republic)

Words and music T. Blair.

Tony

After the PCC elections, the Vicar played a traditional game of musical chairs!

Readers' Postbag

From Mrs Morris, Mr Raynsford and 94 other Parishioners

Dear Sir,

Whilst in no way wishing to denigrate the Vicar's achievements over the last nine years, we believe that the time has come for him to

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Morris, Mr Raynsford and 94 others.

(Unfortunately, due to the long list of signatories, there was insufficient space to print this letter in full. Our apologies. D. Hill, Editor)

Dear Vicar,

I entirely respect your decision to "let me go" from the PCC, but I would like to put it on the record that in my considered opinion you are a complete

Yours sincerely,

Charles Clarke,

The Old Beard Shop,

The High Street.

(The Editor reserves the right to cut letters for reasons of space. D.H.)

Dear Sir,

*How dare people criticise our good friend Mr Prescott, who has been subjected to the most disgusting tide of filth I have ever witnessed coming from the likes of the scumbags who now infect our local press. As someone with an unblemished record for upholding standards in the life of this parish, I would like to make it f***** clear that, when it comes to smearing people up and destroying people's reputations, that is my f****** job. So, keep out of it, you media tossers, or John will end up having to take his own life like our late GP, Dr Kelly.*

Yours insincerely,

A. Campbell (ex-editor of this newsletter)

PS. I enclose my invoice for £47,000, which I would like to be paid before the vicar's wife's hairdressing bill, if you don't mind!

Words of Comfort From Mrs Jowell

I have been asked to say a few words on behalf of the Vicar because no one else will.

We all of us owe a lot to the Vicar who, for the last 9 years, has transformed the parish from the sleazy, corrupt, crime-ridden, run-down mess that it was before he arrived, to the beacon of parochial excellence that it is today.

Yet, some people are now saying that the Vicar should resign. What kind of loyalty is this to a man to whom we owe everything, especially our jobs?

Just think – if someone else was brought in, some people would lose their jobs and have to pay back their mortgages and might even have to remarry their husbands!

Let us all think twice before we start casting stones at one of the greatest men who has ever put me in charge of the parish raffle, annual concert and sports day!

T.B. writes: Thank you very much, Tessa, for that unsolicited testimonial. It's just what I asked for!

A Message From Our Treasurer Mr Brown

I would like to apologise to parishioners for the fact that I haven't been much in evidence around the parish recently. This has meant that I haven't been able to play a part in the various rather unfortunate developments for which the Vicar and his friends must take full responsibility. But I would like to assure everyone that before long you will be seeing very much more of me, and I will be devoting my energies full-time to clearing up the mess of the last nine years. G.B.

BLAIR ANNOUNCES NEW DREAM TEAM

by Our Political Staff **Peter O'Bore**

IN THE most dramatic Cabinet reshuffle since Harold McWilson's notorious "Night of the Long Trousers" in 1978, Prime Minister Tony Blair has kept on the same bunch of dead-beats as before. *(Is this right? Ed.)*

- **Out goes disgraced Deputy Prime Minister, JOHN PRESCOTT.**
- **In comes JOHN PRESCOTT, Deputy Prime Minister in disgrace.**
- **Out goes thuggish bruiser and former Communist, DR JOHN REID.**
- **In comes DR JOHN REID, statesmanlike safe pair of hands.**
- **Out goes MARGARET BECKETT.**
- **In she comes again.**
- **Out goes TONY BLAIR to announce that he is staying on for ever.**

THOSE CABINET CHANGES IN FULL

Minister Without Portfolio **Ruth Kelly**
Minister Without Trousers **John Prescott**
(That's enough appointments. Ed.)

ROMAN TIMES

Kalends of April 44 B.C. **Price Two Denarii (only on Monday)**

CAESAR STILL NOT ASSASSINATED SHOCK

By Our Political Staff Petrus O'Borus

THE ROMAN people were disappointed as the Ides of March came and went without the predicted assassination of Antonius Caesar.

Said leading conspirator Gordonius Brutus, "Look, I've made it clear that it's time for renewal and that we must move forward. The people have given the senate a wake up call saying that they're fed up with all the sleaze and

pointless invasions of other countries."

But Brutus's words fell far short of the expected knife in the back and the feeling in the Senate is that the Dictator will stay on for as long as he can in order to stop Brutus seizing control.

Said Antonius Caesar, "Et non tu, Gorde?" *(cont. XCIV)*

NEW FOREIGN SECRETARY TO REPLACE STRAW

by Our Foreign Affairs Staff **Matthew Da Vinci**

IN A SHOCK move, the Prime Minister has relieved Jack Straw of his post as Foreign Secretary and appointed President George Bush in his place.

The move will apparently delight Washington which has long believed Mr Straw to be "unsound" on central questions such as the Middle East, Iraq, Iran and everything else.

Said Tony Blair: "I am looking forward to working with George Bush. He and I see eye to eye on the important issues such as doing what I am told."

● Full story and pictures p. 94

62-YEAR-OLD WOMAN 'TO HAVE JOB'

by Our Medical Staff **Dr Patricia Rashbrook**

A 62-year-old woman has become the first-ever woman to be made Foreign Secretary.

She said yesterday: "It's a miracle. I am over the hill... I mean the moon.

"All my life I have longed to have a little job and now, thanks to the amazing Tony Blair and his Futility Treatment, my dream has come true."

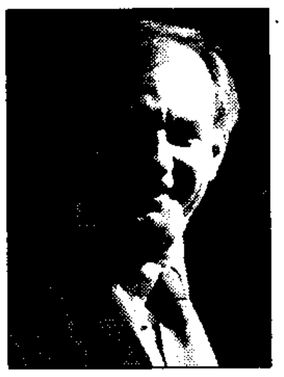
Blair Babe

But there are many critics who are appalled and claim Mrs Beckett is far too old to cope with the demands of a new job.

Going Into New Labour

"What will she do," asked one outraged observer (Mr J. Straw), "with the sleepless nights, the temper tantrums and the constant crying of Mr Blair?"

He concluded: "Mrs Beckett is at an age when she should be thinking about having a baby, not becoming Foreign Secretary."



DR HOON WINS AWARD

by Our Showbiz Staff **Alastair Dalek**

THE MUCH-LOVED waste-of-time traveller and star of the long-running "Dr Hoon" has regenerated once again.

In a previous series he materialised in Iraq, looking for the evil weapons of mass destruction.

Then the Doctor was killed off and no one thought he would ever be seen again.

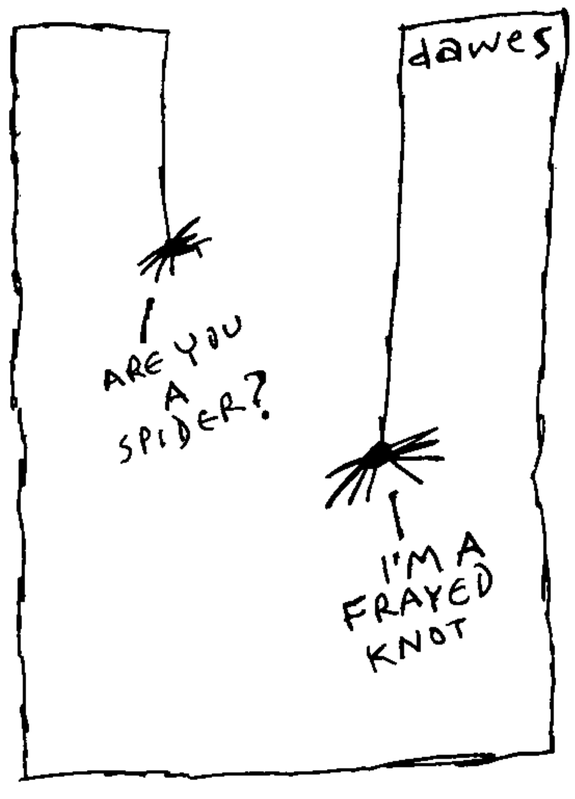
But now he's back, with a new lease of life – this time flying over Europe in search of something to do.

Hoon He?

And his contribution to light entertainment has been recognised with a Nafta award for a lifetime's lack of achievement.

Those Local Election Results In Full

Dollis Hill (South)
Tristram Bicycle-Clip *(Green Conservative Party)* **271**;
Ron Sleaze *(Labour)* **31**;
Simon Lovetrouser *(Liberal Democrat All Night Party)* **57**;
Reg Himmler *(BNP)* **35**;
Daisy Windfarm *(Green Green Party)* **2**; Ayatollah Saddam Galloway *(Respect or Die Party)* **24**;
Tory Gain.



'I DID NOT SLEEP WITH JOHN PRESCOTT'

Woman's Shock Claim

by Our Political Staff **Lunchtime O'Bonk (and Teatime as well)**

TRISH DULL, a high-flying £12,500-a-year school dinner lady from Cleethorpes, shocked the nation yesterday when she admitted that she had never had an affair with the Deputy Prime Minister.

Said the 64-year-old mother of eight, as she broke down on a Radio Five Live phone-in, "Yes, it's true – Mr Prescott never groped me at a party or asked me for oral sex.

"I know this will shock a lot of people", sobbed Mrs Dull, "But in fact I never even met him."

Full story and pictures pp 2-14

Traditional view of Prescott

PRESCOTT TO BE SAVED – SHOCK PLANNING DECISION

By Lunchtime O'Bulldozer

THE polluted northern sprawl know as Prescott last night received a last minute reprieve from Government plans to knock it down in the interest of public health. Critics had condemned Prescott as "Old-fashioned, run-down, unsafe and disgusting."

However the Prime Minister intervened personally and gave assurance that Prescott would be saved for the nation.

"People love Prescott. Prescott represents everything that is good about working class Britain" he said "How could we lose those Back-to-Back legovers (surely "terraces" -Ed), those wonderful old Two-shags up, Two-shags down houses (is this right -Ed?)

Outside John

And of course the streets full of cobblers" (surely "cobbles' - Ed).

"Yes Prescott can breathe again, and will be safe for years to come or until I change my mind tomorrow."

● **Full story p.94**

HOW THE CABINET WORKS

That Prescott Letter To The Press Complaints Commission In Full

Dear Sir Christopher Mayo,

I would like to make a formal complainment to your selves with regards to the dipsicable and roadrageous filth and lies, to put it blatantly, which have been publicated about me in every newspaper in the land.

I am referring, of course, to the allegorisations that I have been having extramartial relativities with women who are not my wife Pauline, who is standing by at this moment with her rolling pin.

I will now illuminate the following untruths and calumnities which have been perpetuated and dissembled by such journals as the Mail on Sunday and all the others.

1. It is entirely untrue that on 3 February 2003 I was driving a red Jaguar on my way to an important meeting with Miss Tracy Temptress, my dairy secretary. In fact on that date I have documentaries to prove that my red Jaguar was having its 15,000-mile service at our local garridge, Jags R Us. So I must have been driving my other vehicle, the silver-grey Jag. This proves that everything allegated by Ms Temptress is a tissue of fabrications from start to finish.

3. When Ms Temptress claims that there is a picture in my office of General Nelson at the Battle of Waterloo, this proves exclusively that she has never been in my office, as the painting over my desk shows Admiral Wellington at the Battle of Trafalgar Square.

2. In contradiction of my basic human rights, pictures purporting to be of myself have been printed in all newspapers showing a private moment at a private office function involving myself assisting a young woman from the typing pool to rise from the floor after she had stumbled in a moment of inubriation as a result of consuming the following items from the Office of the Regions subsidised mini-bar, viz.

14 Bacardi Breezers
12 pints Old Shagger's Export Ale
28 miniatures Uncle Boris's 140-proof vodka

These pictures were therefore a clear broach of my humanistic rights, as laid in the revelant legal instrumentalities from Brussels, and should be punishable by closeure of all British newspapers hencewith.

By Order of the Deputy Prime Minister

X

(his mark)

DANGEROUS MEN STILL AT LARGE

by Our Civil Liberties Staff
Henry D. Porter

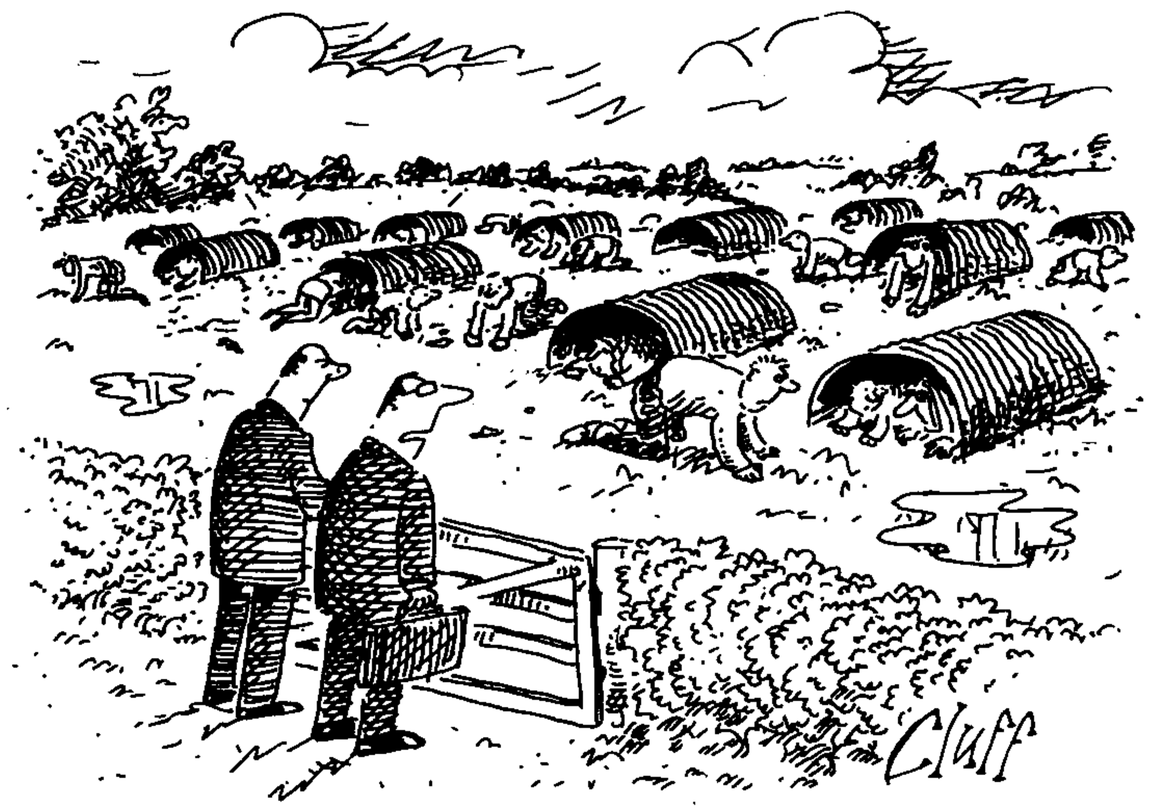
SOME of the most dangerous men in Britain are still at large, despite being convicted of a long list of serious offences.

Although the men are a clear threat to public safety, they have been allowed to remain in the community, where it is almost certain that they will re-offend.

The public were warned last night to look out for:

1. **"Tony" Blair.** The so-called mastermind of one of Britain's most hated criminal gangs. A pathological liar, he has been directly responsible for thousands of deaths in the Middle East.

2. **Mustafa Shag.** A 67-year-old Hull-based serial groper who was described as "a predator" and has assaulted many women. *(That's enough criminals. Ed.)*



"We're totally committed to providing affordable housing for local families"

the Joy of Secretaries

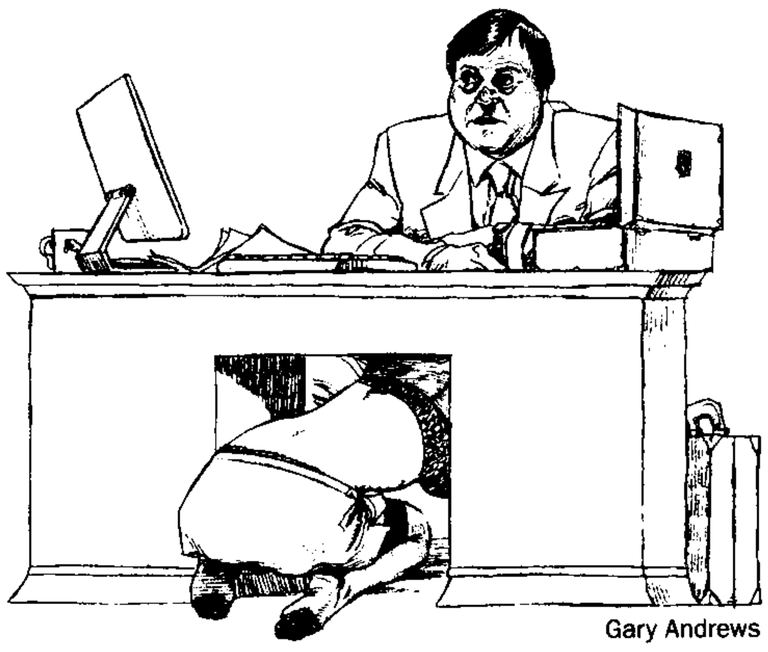
The Gourmet Guide to cringe-making by international Secs Expert Dr Alex Discomfort

The following positions have been recommended for use between consenting Deputy Ministers and their secretaries

THE RED BOX

The man sits at the desk reading his briefings on regeneration and the environment.

The woman gets under the table and addresses the Honorable Member.



Gary Andrews

THE TWO JAGUARS

The man sits in the back of his car refusing to comment before transferring to his other car to avoid the press.

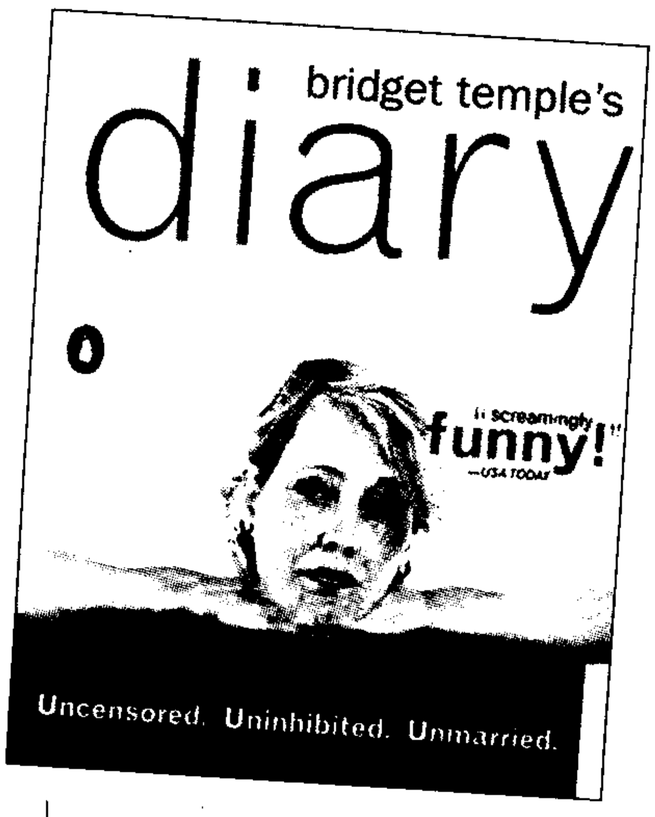
The woman sits in the Mail on Sunday "talking dirty".

THE "UNTENABLE" POSITION

The man kneels in front of the Prime Minister in submission.

Meanwhile, the other man carries on screwing the country.

EXCLUSIVE! Your chance to read an extract from the latest publishing sensation – the raunchy romp which describes, in hilarious detail, the disastrous love-life of a typical 40-something simpleton *(surely 'singleton'? Ed.)*...



October 10, 2003: V. good day – boss took me to swanky VIP bash in St Paulz, for Irak war dead. My hair v. nice and my lttl blk drss much sexier than Cherie's (not difficult!). Then back to DPM's place for spot of naughties. OK, if a bit short. Imagine my surprize when he rolled off, and finally whispred those 3 lttl wrds: "Your car's here." P'raps he could be The One – my v. own Mr Arsey?

● *Cigarettes smoked: 5 (v. good)*

● *Sense of moral bankruptcy: 0 (v.v. bad)*

April 30, 2005: V. bad day. Dumped by DPM. Ministers, huh! – they're all the same! – bastardz! No matter – chatted up by hunky new guy, Max C. Intimate dinner and proposal! Hurrah!

● *Pounds story prostituted for: 250,000 (v. good – or not?)*

BROWN ENTERS PRESCOTT CHIPOLATA ROW

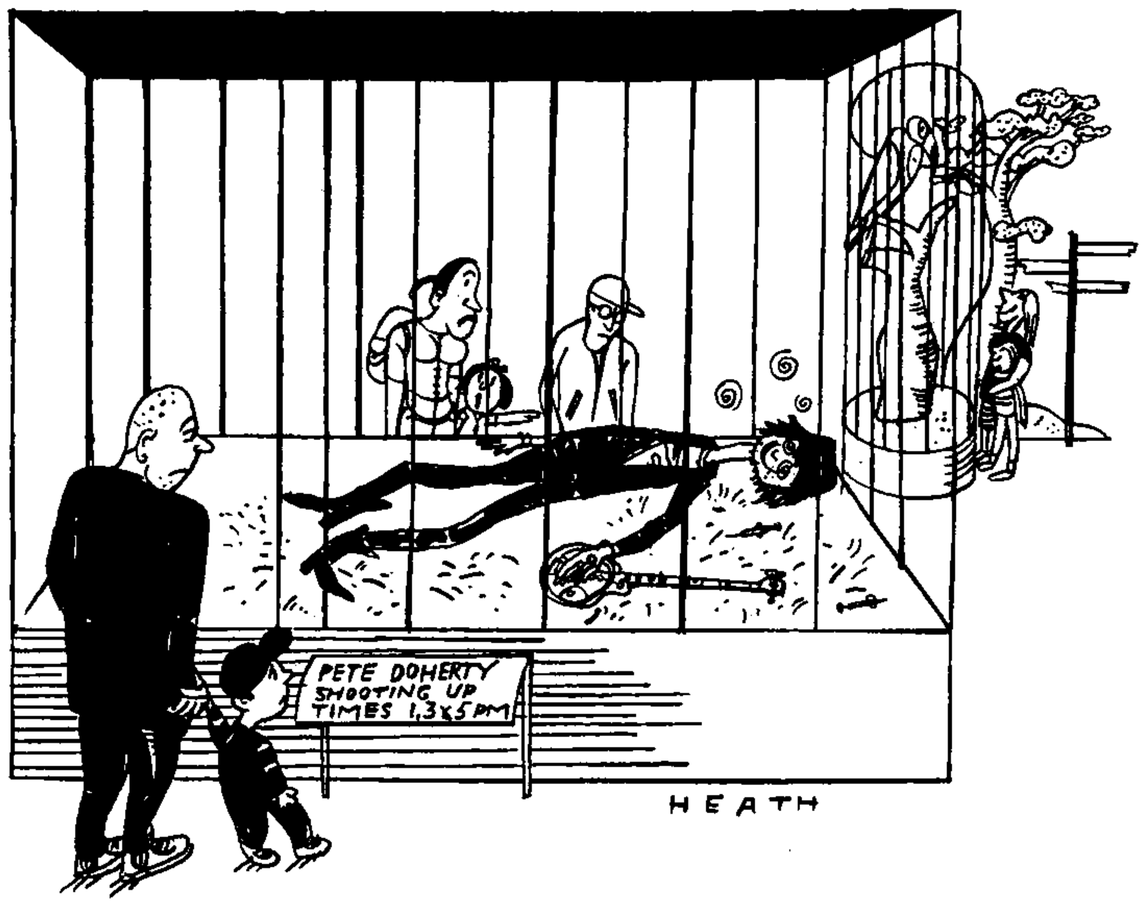
'ENGLAND NOT GOING TO WIN TOURNAMENT THEY WERE NEVER GOING TO WIN' SHOCK

by Our Football Staff **Phil Boots**

THERE was an outbreak of national despair yesterday, as it emerged that the World Cup – which had been widely predicted not to come home – was *not* coming home.

Experts who had said that "It's all over" were forced to concede that now "it was all over".

England's chances of international glory lie in tatters after the disaster of Wayne Rooney's foot. The fans' dreams are as broken as his fourth metatarsal. Where once we could look forward to going home after a first-round defeat by Trinidad and Tobago, now we still can. Yes, *(cont. p. 94)*



Advertisement

NEW FROM GNOMA

The Incredible Football Boot That Will Change Your Life

The Metatarsal™

Following years of research, footwear technologists at the Gnoma Laboratories in Somalia have developed a revolution in advanced soccological innovation. Made from new, super-lightweight, recycled cardboard, the **Metatarsal** looks just like a normal boot, but as soon as you put it on, your foot immediately breaks in several places and you're out for the rest of the season!! Works every time!!

Says international star **W.R.**, *"Aaargh!!"*

Send now for your pair of **Metatarsals** and be on crutches in minutes!

Price: £79.99 (laces extra)

Colours: Manchester Red, Chelsea Blue, Newcastle Brown

Court Circular

Mustique

His Royal Highness the Prince William will today visit a luxury yacht and unveil a pair of flowery swimming trunks. He will be attended by the Girlfriend Royal, Miss Kate Fruity, wearing a formal turquoise bikini. His Royal Highness will then proceed into the sea where he will be presented with a series of dive bombs by Charlie Ricketson-Smythe, the Old Etonian Poursuivante, and Rupert Rupertson, the Bloody-Good-Bloke-in-Waiting. The Royal Party will then get annoyed by the arrival of the Gentlemen of the Press.

That Procession In Full

1st Jet Ski

Mr Jason Filth of Filthpix

2nd Jet Ski

Mr Len Scap of Blurry Snaps International

1st Lilo

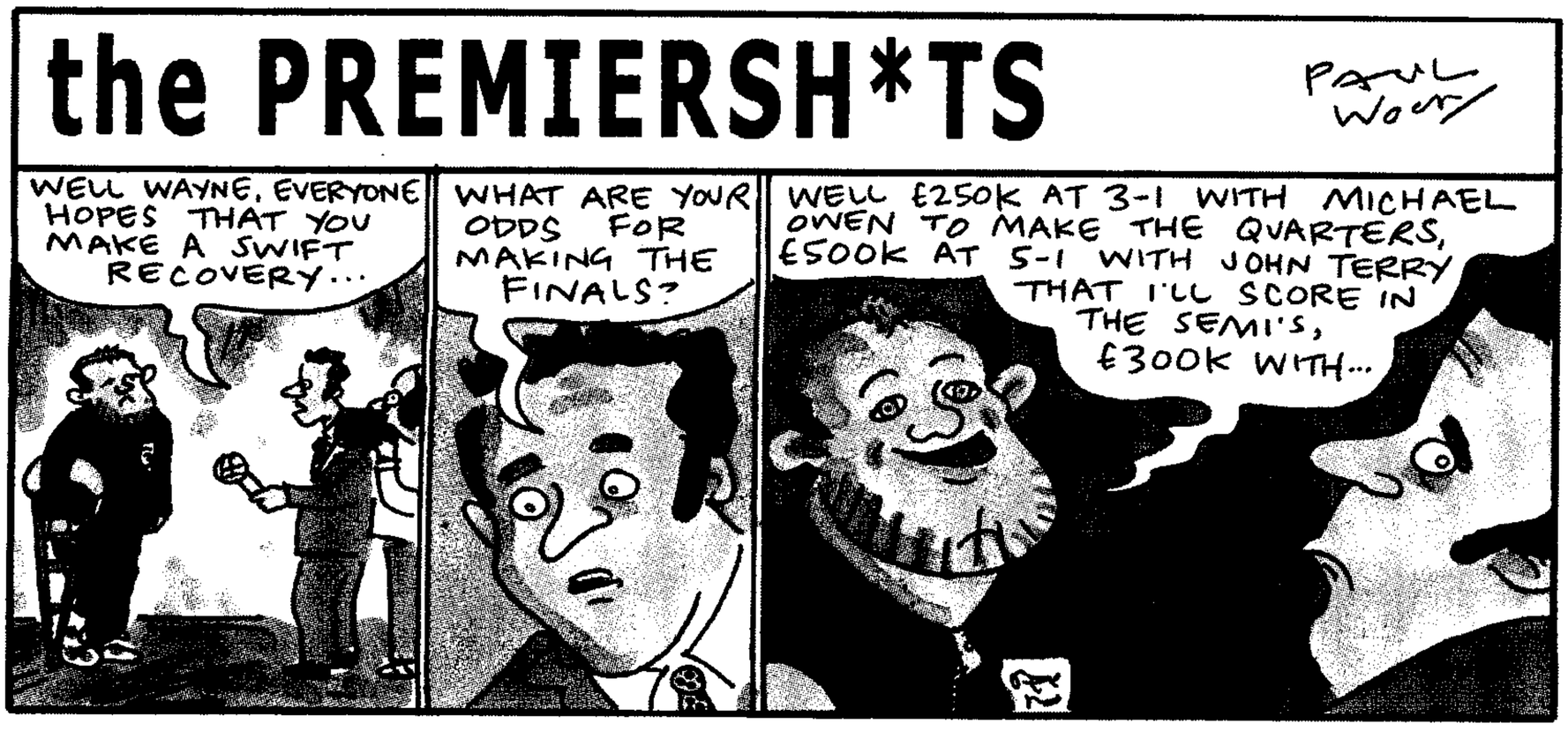
Signor Slizi Paparazzi of Paris Snatch Magazine

1st Inflatable Dolphin

Mr Jonathan Isaby of the London Evening Standard

BORIS PLAYS FOR ENGLAND

the PREMIERSH*TS


PAUL WOOLEY
WELL WAYNE, EVERYONE HOPES THAT YOU MAKE A SWIFT RECOVERY...
WHAT ARE YOUR ODDS FOR MAKING THE FINALS?
WELL £250K AT 3-1 WITH MICHAEL OWEN TO MAKE THE QUARTERS, £500K AT 5-1 WITH JOHN TERRY THAT I'LL SCORE IN THE SEMI'S, £300K WITH...

ONLY IN THE SUN!!!

WILL WAYNE ROONEY BE PLAYING IN THE WORLD CUP IN SIX WEEKS' TIME?

YOU TELL US!!!

If you have no idea because you're not a doctor, but you say 'yes' phone: 08009 008 789

If you have no idea because you're not a doctor, but you say 'no' phone: 08009 008 789

Calls are charged at £3 a minute so you'll be the one breaking your foot, kicking the wall in frustration, when the phone bill arrives.

How you can save the planet the Cameron way

Hi,

I'm Dave Cameron. You may have heard of me! I'm the Blue Guy who's gone Green!

Clever, eh?

But, hey guys, you can do it too, and help save the planet!

Who says it isn't easy to be green?

It was Kermit the Frog. Remember?

But me and my friend Zac aren't just a pair of Muppets!

We're old Etonians!

And there's a big difference!

So, lets get down to being cool to stop the world getting warm!

❶ ***Always cycle to work, even if your chauffeur has to drive behind you with all your important documents, iPods, clean shoes, change of underwear and top hat.***

Another great thing about having your chauffeur driving behind you is that if you get tired, you can always throw the bike away and hop into the back!

❷ ***Always use the bus or the train. That way you get to know what it feels like to be an ordinary person, before your helicopter takes you back to London!***

❸ ***Never wear a tie!***

Do you realise that tying a tie uses up 340 kilowatts of energy that could otherwise power a small wind turbine!

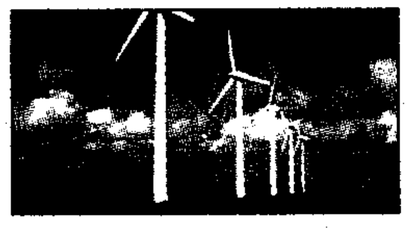
Also making ties wastes thousands of acres of valuable tie forest in Thailand!

Simply leave your tie with your chauffeur, and he'll jet it off to you, wherever you are in the world.

❹ ***Another good tip is to get someone to grow your own vegetables!***

We've got this marvellous little man in the village who comes in once a week.

So there you are!



Signed
Cameron the Frog
Chief Muppet
The New Conservative Party

Vote Conservative for a Green Planet!

My Moment of Madness

by Mark Oaten-Beam

I was under the most extraordinary pressure trying to cope with my duties as a closet homosexual and then I began to lose my hair as well.

It was then that I suppose I sought some kind of release and I joined the Lib Dems. There was an excitement and a sense of danger that I didn't get from hanging out with rent boys.

I am not proud of it. I know that a lot of people think that being a Lib Dem is something to be ashamed of but I am trying to sort myself out.

I am looking to the future and hope one day people will see a photograph of me and not burst into laughter.

© *Sunday Times Trash 2006*

Advertisement

Have you got election problems?

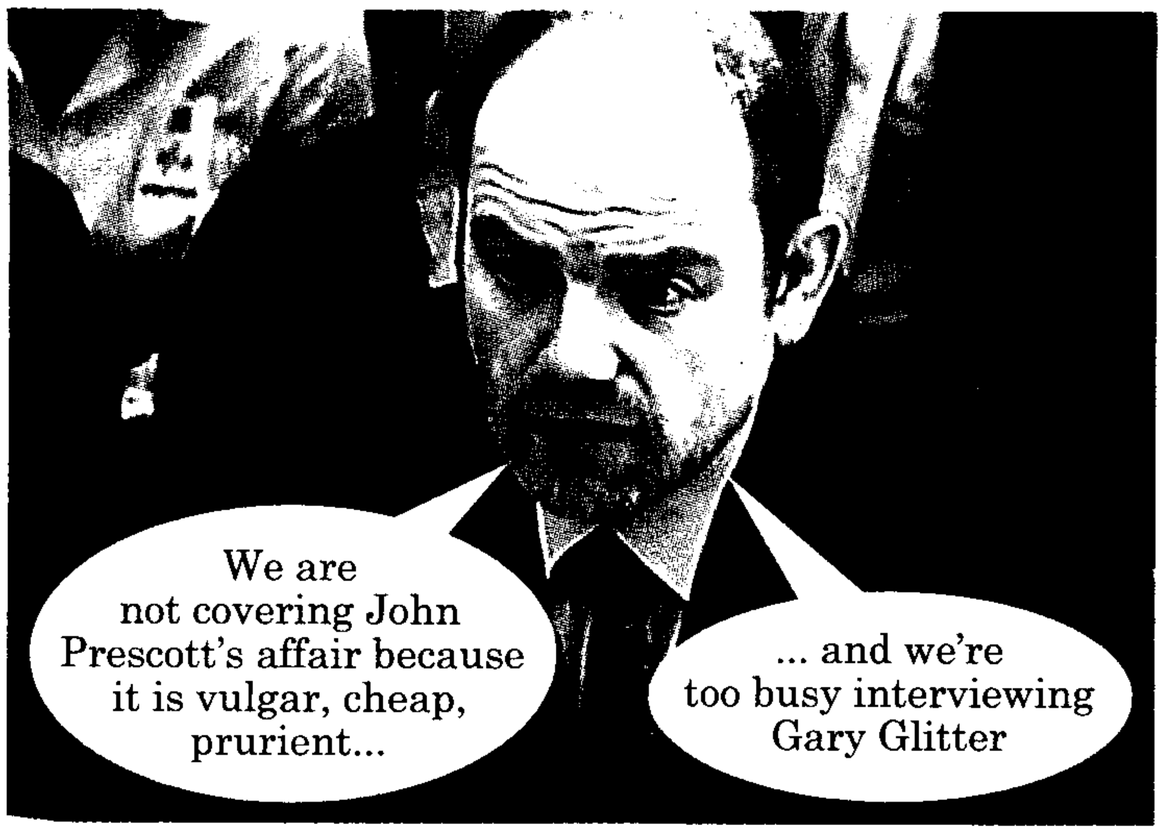
Dr Gordon Brown writes

"One in three labour candidates admits suffering from "election loss". This is nothing to be ashamed about and is entirely due to factors beyond your control – i.e. impotence at the very top of the body politic.

I promise that I can restore health and vigour to even the most flaccid member.

Order my booklet at once **The Role of Britain in the New World Order** (*Bloomsbury* £39.99) and you too will once again enjoy being up in the polls."

BBC NEWS VALUES


We are not covering John Prescott's affair because it is vulgar, cheap, prurient...
... and we're too busy interviewing Gary Glitter

ANNA FORD ACCEPTS SAINSBURY'S POST

ANNA FORD has just secured a job with Sainsbury's, less than a week after leaving her job fronting the BBC's One O'Clock News.

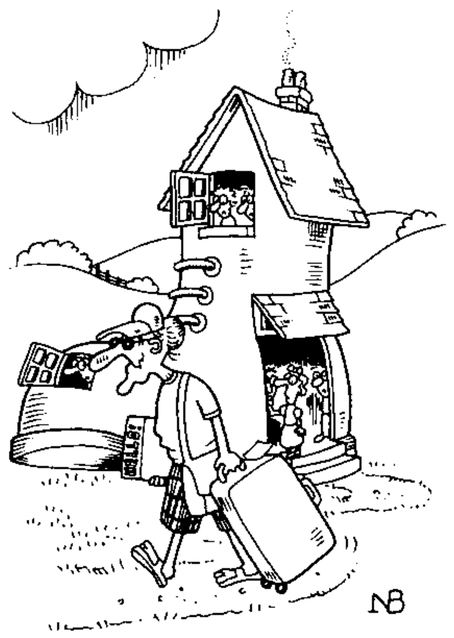
A Sainsbury's spokesman said: "Naturally we're delighted at this appointment – we'll start her off with something simple like parking loose trolleys, before entrusting her with the price gun."

LATE FERTILITY NEWS

THE SIXTY-three-year-old British woman who is pregnant following I.V.F treatment in Italy says that her case is a timely reminder to all women.

"I'd hate to think that some women are so career-minded that they leave thinking about starting a family until into their mid seventies, when it could well be too late" said *(cont p.94)*

MODERN NURSERY RHYMES



There was an old woman
who lived in a shoe,

She left all her children
and went to Corfu.

NORFOLK BIRD FLU OUTBREAK

30,000 birds get flu...

None of them sleep with John Prescott...

So no one cares...

... Er, that's it.

LAUNCH OF NEW KIDS' PAPER

POLICE LOG

Neasden Central Police Station

Office hours: 9-12 Mon-Tues (except Tuesday)

5 May 2006

0900 hrs Stress counselling session for all officers who have been engaged in tracking foreign-born criminals released into the community when they should have been deported. Unfortunately, despite a rigorous 20-minute search of the pub across the road (The Al Qaeda Arms, formerly the Duke of Wellington), no foreign murderers or rapists were apprehended. This has led to great trauma among the officers concerned, many of whom are now on sick leave in the aforesaid licensed premises, suffering from PFSS (Post Failed Search Syndrome).

1015 hrs An emergency call was received from a Mrs Ethel Stothard of Kelmer Road, who alleged that she was being subjected in her own home to assault by a group of kids, whom she described as "hooligans". This was a clear breach of the young persons' human rights under the Young Persons' Right To Intimidate Senior Citizens In Their Own Homes Act 2004. An armed response unit was sent to arrest Mrs Stothard, who was charged when she had regained consciousness. The youths in question were advised by DCI Ruislip that they were entitled to sue the accused for compensation for loss of dignity and hurt feelings, up to the sum of £1 million, and were given the relevant forms, CC/123, and were supplied with details for a firm of lawyers who would be prepared to act on a No-Win Huge-Fee basis (Messrs Carter-Fuck & Co).

1117 hrs The entire division was placed on red alert and mobilised to deal with a major terrorist incident: namely a young woman who had been spotted outside the Primark store in Rusbridger Road wearing a T-shirt inciting acts of terrorism with the words 'Bollocks to Blair', The young woman, Ms Sarah-Jane Fox-Pelling, was detained for the statutory 28 days, or would have been had she not fallen underneath a 137 bus whilst under escort to the cells.

1830 hrs Officers made a further visit to an address in Downing Street, the residence of a Mr Blair, in relation to a very serious alleged hate crime committed in 1999 – namely shouting the words 'Come on England!' during the broadcast of an international rugby match between England and Wales. This was clearly intended to incite racial hatred against the Welsh people in particular and the entire Celtic diaspora in general. The Prime Minister was duly cautioned, and the officers then retired to the new penthouse suite overlooking the River Thames, presented by the people of London to Commissioner Sir Ian Blair, where alcoholic beverages were served to celebrate the conclusion of a very successful day. Officers then drove back to the station, causing only a minimum of civilian casualties (12).

DIARY

EAMONN HOLMES

Let no-one kid you it's easy being a television presenter. Far from it. The moment you see that green light come on, you are the senior pilot in charge of that aeroplane, and that's one helluva responsibility. And if that plane goes down, an awful lot of lives could be lost, with all the accompanying name-calling and finger-pointing from embittered loved ones hell-bent on extracting their tuppence-ha'penny worth.

As a young man I went to see the movie "All the President's Men", about the great Watergate journalists Woodward and Bernstein. And the rest is history. Everyone now knows that, there and then, I vowed that one day I, too, would present the National Lottery show on prime-time television.

But first I had to learn my trade. It takes years and years to learn how to be the perfect broadcaster. Let no-one kid you it's simple to speak to camera. Believe me, it's not. It's very, very hard. What many people don't realise is that it's not just a matter of looking at the camera: you also have to speak to it. Some people – not many, but a few – can do the looking, and some people can do the speaking. But it takes a very special kind of person to be able to do both at the same time.

Unlike many of today's younger so-called "broadcasters" (and, while we're on the subject, what the hell makes them think they've earned the right to call themselves broadcasters?) I spent three years practising before the mirror before I even set foot in a studio. Everyone morning and afternoon, without fail, I would look at myself a square, TV-sized mirror and rehearse those all-important catchphrases, such as "See you after the break", "So how's the weather looking today, then?" and "Over to Fiona, now for a brief news update".

Once I had mastered those basics – and here we're talking anything from a year to eighteen months – I set about attempting the more serious stuff. Looking straight at the mirror, I would repeat, "And reports are just coming in of a major pile up on the M25. Police fear there could many lives lost" over and over again.

Now a lot of less experienced broadcasters would smile while they said those words, thinking that this would make the news more enjoyable for the breakfast viewer. And in many ways they would be right. But it was only long, hard months of practising my trade before the mirror that convinced me that there was another, even better, way to do it – and that was with *a completely straight face: maybe even with a two-or-three-second look of real concern*. Then – and only then – could one turn to camera 4, give a lovely big smile, and say, "And now it's that time of the morning when we go over to the gorgeous Lizzy to Fight That Flab – in a very fetching yellow leotard, if I may make so bold as to say, Lizzy!"

Later in the programme, when you turn to Camera 3 and say, "Any further news of that traffic pile-up?" you can reduce the look of concern to maybe one second, or even less – but you should always keep it in reserve. Remember: smiling is important, but so too is concern – and it takes an experienced broadcaster to master when the time is just right for the one or the other. And only a real television veteran such as myself can do both at the same time.

Sometimes, of course, exceptional circumstances mean one has to trust to one's instinct. On the morning after the death of Princess Diana, for instance, I exhibited my concerned expression for no less than 19 minutes 40 seconds in a single burst. How do I know this? Because I timed it later with my stop-watch. Professionalism: that's a word you don't hear much in the studios of GMTV these days, I regret to say.

Many of my moments on the sofa at GMTV have since passed into television history. Like the time I famously said, "And now over to John for the sport" – and – wholly unbeknownst to yours truly! – it turned out to be John's morning off and Richard was on duty instead!!! Red faces all round!

Or, more seriously, the truly historic occasion when I gained all the plaudits for my in-depth interview with the legendary black person Nelson Mandela. This was – proof, if proof be needed, that with 20 years experience to my credit I could handle a serious interview just as well as those so-called 'heavyweights' who come on in the evening, with their puffed-up reputations.

I'll never forget that historic meeting between Eamonn and Nelson. Nelson had obviously been waiting years to meet me, and I was determined to make it worth his while. As soon as I met him, I knew he was a thoroughly decent guy because – unlike so many others – he didn't start asking me for the low-down on my at times stormy relationship with Anthea Turner, or how I really got on with Fiona Phillips. Instead, he just sat there, all ears, fascinated to hear what my first question would be.

And I didn't let the guy down – or, more importantly, our viewers either. It was an open secret that he had been in prison, and I wasn't going to beat around the bush.

"I don't think many of us could imagine, Nelson, what it must be like to be cooped up in one place – and let's be frank, we're talking about prison, here – without being able to watch your favourite programmes on television for years at a time. It must be literally unimaginable! But tell, us, Nelson – which particular programmes would you say you missed the most?!"

A magic moment, indeed – and one that has since entered the annals of TV history. It's not often two men, both leaders in their respective fields, get a chance to sit down and exchange views. And, yes, I'm delighted to have helped give Nelson that vital leg-up on the step-ladder to Planet Fame.

Some day, as the man said, a change is a-gonna-come. Like the great Martin Luther King, I continue to cling relentlessly to the dream that, one day, GMTV will return to its original vision of quality popular programming – infotainment at its very best. But until that day comes, I have vowed to work elsewhere, for more money if need be. It is, I tell myself, when the critics start their all-too-predictable carpet-bombing, a stand of which the legendary Winston Churchill would surely approve.

As told to

CRAIG BROWN

GARY, I CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT YOU SAID IN THIS INTERVIEW FOR STYLE MAGAZINE...
"WHEN ASKED ABOUT MONOGAMY, GARY REPLIED THAT HE FOUND IT OLD-FASHIONED, OPPRESSIVE, OVER-RATED AND DULL."
"DEBS AND I ARE INTO A LIGHTER, MORE CASUAL VIBE"!
I'VE BEEN QUOTED OUT OF CONTEXT... I WAS DRUNK DOING THE INTERVIEW...
I THOUGHT SHE SAID "MAHOGANY"!

Literary Review

Asian boob

Londonstani

Gautam Malkani

(Fourth Estate, £12.99)

IN THE west London wasteland that forms the backdrop to Gautam Malkani's debut novel, the greatest insult a streetsmart young Asian can suffer is to be labelled a "coconut".

"You could tell from the poncey novel an newspaper on his dashboard an Coldplay album playin in his car that he was a muthafuckin coconut," says Jas, our narrator. "So white he was inside his brown skin, he probably talked like those gorafied desis who read the news on TV."

Gautam Malkani might recognise the description because by most measures he is himself a "gorafied desi". Born in Hounslow, he went to Cambridge and now writes for the *FT*. Doubtless he not only has a poncey novel an newspaper on his dashboard – the batty boy he write the dam fings, as Jas's rudeboy cohorts would say.

As a result, much of the considerable ink expended on *Londonstani* has tussled with its authenticity. Is the patchwork patois of literals, txtspeak, swearing, rap and Hindi the true underground sound of Hounslow, or is it contrived by a wily hack for the reading pleasure of poncey goras? Are the fights, the fone [*sic*] scams, the "complicated family-related shit" and the low-grade bling that make up the plot a genuine slice of life in the Heathrow flightpath, or are they mere plot devices?

And, by extension, is *Londonstani* a significant socio-cultural event or just another minstrel show to divert the literati? The publishers, unsurprisingly, opt for the former in every case: *Londonstani* "reveals a Britain that has never before been explored in the novel."

They may be right. Yet no one appears to have stopped to ask *why* this newly-revealed Britain has "never before been explored in a novel". You could suggest countless other Britains the novel has not yet explored – there is no enduring work about Lincolnshire swimming-pool attendants, for example. The question is not about whether something has been explored, but whether it is worth exploring.

In fact scrape away the surface sheen of rudeboys in Beemers, their rituals and their slang – which, as luck would have it, is grist to the mill for newspapers' features pages – and it turns out that the Britain of *Londonstani* is a very familiar place indeed. Beneath the cussin' and the neologisms this is a simple coming-of-age tale – Jas is a wide-eyed schoolboy who gets in with the wrong crowd, winds up in trouble after some high jinks get out of control and finally discovers that the best thing to be is yourself. The moral compass of the novel is similarly familiar, calibrated towards a distinctly liberal, middle-class magnetic north.

However, having committed himself to an eye-catching idiom (and it served its purpose – after a bidding war publisher Fourth Estate paid an advance in excess of £300,000 at the Frankfurt Book Fair last year), Malkani finds himself hamstrung by his own invention. He wants to use Jas as the tacit voice of the author, there to flag up the kind of thematic points about race, identity or authenticity that might elevate his narrative beyond an Ali G sketch.

He needs to do this because he has been marketed as an heir to Zadie and Monica who has something weighty to tell us about Britain today. But because Jas can only speak and think in the language he's been given ("The three a us spoke in sync like we belonged to some tutty boy band" etc) it becomes rather difficult for Malkani to suddenly slip in a sombre *aperçu* about cross-cultural assimilation. And so when he does, it's a bum note every time: try this, on the caste system – "How can someone be better an more fly than someone else unless they're really better an more fly?"

It all means that *Londonstani* ends up as precisely the coconut that its protagonists mock – Asian culture served medium rare, just the way the Wasps like it. It's a shame because somewhere in here is a likeable parody of Asian adolescents and their heroic delusions. But like the cars they drive, it's trying so hard to look cool it ends up looking silly.

Books & Bookmen

■ LOOKING at the collapse of Tim Waterstone's bid for his old company, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that HMV led him up the garden path – making interested noises and then setting punitive and unreasonable conditions.

It decrees that due diligence (shorthand for going through the accounts with a fine-toothed comb) would have to be completed in a fortnight and that the whole deal was to be non-exclusive were, as Waterstone rightly pointed out, things that "no potential acquirer" could have accepted.

The consortium's backer Lazard certainly agreed with him, withdrawing support once the absurd HMV response was received. The reason for this childish, teasing behaviour is almost certainly the personal animosity between Tiger Tim and outgoing HMV ceo Alan "Weasel" Giles. All very well behind the bike sheds, but is this any way to run a multi-million pound retail business? The Plan B of a Waterstone bid for Ottakar's now looks more attractive than ever.

■ HARPERCOLLINS' £5m investment in the life and times of Wayne Rooney is looking as fragile as the England football star's fractured metatarsal.

The plan was that during the World Cup Rooney would ring ghostwriter 'Oonter Davies every day with an update. 'Oonter would hastily bash out the last few chapters describing the 20-year-old's heroic achievements in Germany, in time for publication at the end of July. How he will fill these chapters now is hard to say.

But HarperCollins is nothing if not flexible (which is more than can be said for Rooney's foot). A few months ago it was due to launch a separate HarperSport division, with staff to be hired. But then in March it wrote that large cheque to Rooney – requiring "a structural re-organisation within this area" and a "review".

Staff are now told to advise applicants for jobs at HarperSport that "they will come back to them when they are a little clearer about the role going forward".

'Bookworm'

First Drafts
12 Books That Changed The World
1 The Maid of Buttermere by Melvyn Bragg
2 Without A City Wall by Melvyn Bragg
3 A Time to Dance by Melvyn Bragg
4 The Silken Net by Melvyn Bragg
5
Pearsall

Melvyn Bragg

WHAT YOU DIDN'T MISS

Sir Alf

Leo McKinstry

(HarperCollins, £18.99)

IN THE lives of most successful leaders, be they Genghis Khan, Sir Winston Churchill or His Late Holiness Pope John II, there is a single moment which defines the essence of their heroic stature.

One statement or gesture, typically forged in the white-hot crucible of crisis, can confirm the titanic qualities that authenticate their uniqueness. For Alf Ramsey this fateful encounter with destiny occurred at 4.51pm on 30 July 1966, when with England's lions cast down by a late equalizer by Germany's Horst Wessel, this legendary non-communicator was summoned on to the hallowed Wembley turf to rouse his crestfallen warriors.

Alf reached deep within himself. "Gentlemen," he tersely informed them. "We are drawing 2-2 with our German opponents. Should we score another goal, we shall win. Should we concede it, then we lose. It is as simple as that." Immediately weariness was replaced by the bright hope of conquest. "Make no mistake," recalled Ramsey's towering centre-forward Barry Chopper. "If Germany had scored again, we'd have lost. People forget that. Alf's genius was that he could read the game like this. He was always one step ahead of the pack."

Yet, with Chopper's final goal having confirmed a mighty victory, the labourer's son from Dagenham betrayed no emotion. Asked to describe his feelings he replied: "It has been a very pleasant afternoon, though I must confess to feeling rather hot in all this warm sun we've been having."

Sadly by 1973, following England's unexpected defeat against the Falkland Islands, the end of an extraordinary career was in sight. Sacked by the FA, Ramsey confessed to feeling "really very disappointed". In a long, twilit retirement he featured as President of the Ipswich and District Wisteria Growers Association, was renowned for his collection of stamps and [*continues*]

Pseuds Corner

There are people who belong to another age. It is not that they are out of date, or unable to cope with modern life, or are perversely talking and dressing as if the world had failed to move on. Rather, they have a kind of moral separateness from the age in which they have their being. Alan Shearer is one of those.

SIMON BARNES,
The Times

Trashing a hotel room is purer art than anything I've recorded. Consciously or unconsciously, I am creating art to sell it. But I threw pizza all over a hotel room in Amsterdam last week. No one else saw it. Just me and the cleaner. The fact I paid for it means it's pure.

MIKE SKINNER of The Streets,
Observer

Do you mind not calling me "love"? Would it really put you out at all if you called me Professor Greer? Would that really hurt?

GERMAINE GREER in 'Grumpy Old Women' by Judith Holder, *Daily Express*

The Shifting Axes of Difference in the Global Era

The first lecture provides a critical cartography of the shifting locations of sexualised and racialised differences in the age of technologically mediated global power relations. It argues that advanced capitalism is itself a 'difference' engine which multiplies the variations on the theme of commodified otherness. Resistance to this quantitative proliferation takes the form of qualitative ethical and political concerns. The lecture makes a case for a non-dialectical approach to differences in opposition to the claims of ideologies like liberalism and techno-capitalism.

Leverhulme Lecture given by Professor ROSI BRAIDOTTI, Birkbeck College

As a club DJ I rock bangers that create crazy excitement in the party. The original was a hood classic – so big they made me a 'special' – a revoiced version dedicated to me. Shit is straight banging, ATL trap music meets JA shottas. It's an ugly situation.

TIM WESTWOOD on Young Jeezy & Akon's 'Soul Survivor (The Gun Session remix)' in 'Last Track I Loved' feature, *Q Magazine*

Meanwhile, he wants to talk about words – the words of Beckett and Stevenson, of Melville and Conrad and 'the big feast' of literature. Hours later, G&Ts long drunk, smokes smoked, I leave him in Hazlitt's shrine to good writing, a hobo-like knapsack slung over his shoulder. Outside the neon night is rain-slicked and electric with the promise of spring, luscious and tawdry as if Warner himself had imagined it.

HEPHZIBAH ANDERSON meets novelist ALAN WARNER, *Observer*

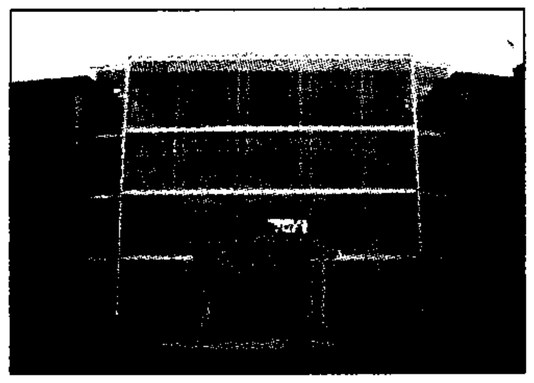
CONTRIBUTORS: Richard P.C. Plowden, Luke Turner, Nigel Pearson, Paul Goldman, Alex Pook, Jake Powell.

IN THE BACK

HEALTH FUNDING

Norfolk turkey

THE scandal of the millions made by the companies running the Norfolk & Norwich PFI hospital (pictured) when they refinanced the deal three years ago has finally hit the headlines – even though local Lib Dem MP Norman Lamb first demanded an investigation soon after the event and the *Eye* has been reporting it for almost as long.



Now public accounts committee (PAC) chairman Edward Leigh has lambasted the way the Octagon consortium – made up of Barclays, 3i, Serco, Laing and Innisfree – took £82m of the £116m refinancing gain, increasing its return on the deal to a usurious 60 percent, while the hospital kept only £34m, 29 percent of the total. Right-winger Leigh denounced "the unacceptable face of capitalism… shown by this private sector consortium in its dealings with the public sector".

But how did the consortium bully the trust out of so many millions in the first place (which, with a £15m deficit and having just announced 450 job cuts, it can ill afford to lose)? Trust papers show that Octagon was represented in the re-financing negotiations by PFI specialists KPMG – the very same firm that Patricia Hewitt recently brought in to deal with trust deficits across the country. And the sub-standard deal was approved by the Treasury's privatised PFI promotion arm, Partnerships UK (PUK). Yet the PAC had no criticism for its role and didn't point out that perhaps PUK was always likely to rubber-stamp a bonanza for the consortium: among PUK's shareholders are… Barclays and Serco.

Meanwhile, at his recent monthly press briefing, the prime minister peddled the new government line on the NHS deficits crisis: "As hospitals end up becoming more financially accountable and the costs of the system are truly exposed within it, yes you will find difficult and challenging change of transition (sic)…"

So what are the crippling "costs of the system" and could they have been avoided? A quick look at the trusts making the biggest job cuts because of their deficits shows that most of them have enormous PFI deals that commit them to tens of millions extra expense each year, in many cases for fewer beds than they had before.

University Hospital North Stafford, which signed up to a £350m PFI deal in 2004 will lay off 1,000; Worcestershire Acute hospitals, lumbered with a £95m contract in 2002, will lose 720 staff after being told to save £20m; County Durham and Darlington acute, committed to a 30-year £61m PFI deal from 1998 will cut 700 jobs; and Norfolk and Norwich hospitals, with the outrageous scheme above, will ditch 450 staff.

Once again the costs of hospital PFIs are indeed "truly exposed".

Private practice

THE last 12 months have certainly been the best ever for one part of the health sector: those companies that are cashing in on government promises to hand treatment over to private firms.

So profitable has the business become, and such are the prospects as NHS hospitals lay off staff and cut back operations, the private equity industry – never slow to spot a fast buck – is stepping in. The latest move comes from Apax Partners, which is teaming up with South African group Netcare to buy Britain's General Healthcare Group.

The new outfit has set up an arm called Amicus to bid for NHS work, presumably in the hope that the beguiling new name will mask memories of Netcare's record in this country – in particular its lamentable performance on a contract to provide cataract operations in Oxfordshire, the costs of which multiplied. The local health trust tried to take the contract back, only to be overruled by the Department of Health.

Meanwhile the margins for private companies seem immune from scrutiny: two weeks ago parliament's health committee criticised Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt for refusing to release information on procurement that would allow them to examine claims of firms being paid 30 percent above NHS tariffs – only to be met with the inevitable response that further details were "commercially confidential".

Axe to grind

WHEN the Department of Health cancels plans for a new privately-run cardiology treatment centre in south Yorkshire, it would be fair to say the scheme is being scrapped, cancelled or abandoned. But not in the DoH which has its own version of newspeak for such announcements.

Revelations in the *Health Service Journal* that the department was being forced to axe nearly a third of its 24 planned independent treatment centres (ITCs) and was delaying the rest by up to a year, have been denied. Ministers are not dropping the schemes, said the DoH in a statement, rather they are "adapting to deliver activity (sic) where it can be more useful".

It must just be coincidence then that most of the last-minute "adapting" has taken place in the face of fierce opposition to the ITCs in the backyards of the government's treasured foundation or semi-independent hospitals. The 32 foundation trusts around the country are, not surprisingly, concerned that the competition from the planned ITCs in their area could undermine their own "business plans" and viability – and that is an embarrassment the government could not face.

Hence the plans to axe, sorry "adapt", among others, a £200m general surgery unit in Sheffield and the £40m cardiology treatment centre for Rotherham and Barnsley followed concerns raised by a cluster of five foundation trusts in Yorkshire.

To reassure angry developers and private healthcare providers who have already invested time and money in assembling their bids, the DoH statement said: "We remain committed to the full procurement of capacity from the independent sector as announced last year – £550m annually... We plan to deliver c.£3bn of elective procedures over the next five years, and £1bn of diagnostics."

As Alex Nunns, of Keep Our NHS Public, observed: "Basically it looks like foundation trusts are going to be spared the 'competition' that will still be inflicted on poor old NHS hospitals." But that's OK because at least the government's chums in the private sector will be guaranteed their public handouts.

IN THE COURTS

Peacock and bull

AN extraordinary case before the court of appeal has for the first time cast light on the hitherto secret world of plea bargains struck between criminals and judges.

Defence barristers and a senior court official have accused a crown court judge of "reneging" on a secret plea bargain made during a major organised crime trial in London in 2004. They claim that the judge, Christopher Elwen, handed down significantly higher prison sentences to their clients than those he had promised in return for guilty pleas – a deal done behind the prosecution's back.

The allegations were made in an appeal against sentence by brothers Tony, Martin and Paul Bowers, who plotted various robberies from the boardroom over the Peacock gym in Canning Town, east London, until they were arrested in March 2003. The police claimed the so-called Peacock gang was raising cash to build a hotel and casino complex near to London's Docklands following the government's relaxation of gaming laws.

The brothers had pleaded guilty at Southwark crown court in 2004 to charges including conspiracy to steal after their lawyers told them the judge was apparently prepared to offer a seven-year maximum sentence. Instead Judge Elwen sentenced them to a total of 25 years – with crime boss Tony Bowers getting 12 years and six months. The four original defence barristers then had to withdraw from the case in order to give evidence as witnesses at the appeal on 3 March this year.

More than two months have passed since the appeal court judges, led by Lord Justice Thomas, heard the allegations of a broken deal; but so far they seem reluctant to order that Judge Elwen be called to face cross-examination on his claim that there was no such agreement. Counsel for the brothers, Daffydd Enoch, said that if the appeal court accepted the evidence from the barristers and court official, it had no choice but to hear from the judge.

Judges cannot ordinarily be compelled to give evidence about cases they have handled. But if the appeal court fails to resolve who is telling the truth in this unusual case, it would seriously undermine the judiciary's credibility.

David Whittaker, the lead barrister in the trial with 20 years experience and who also sits as a junior judge, agreed the deal was "highly irregular and unorthodox", but said he believed Judge Elwen did not want it communicated in open court. Samantha Cohen, another defence barrister, told the appeal court she was "staggered" by the sentence. "I really couldn't believe it was five and a half years more than the defendant had been promised... I felt we, the defence, had been put in a difficult position by the judge."

Nick Turner, the then senior list officer at Southwark crown court, corroborated Cohen's evidence that she had asked him to sound out the judge who "authorised" him to pass on the offer of seven years. Turner said he had checked the position twice with Judge Elwen. "I wouldn't [pass it on] without the express authority of the judge. I don't want to be melodramatic, but it would be like committing professional suicide," he said.

Turner, who has since moved to the Old Bailey, also revealed that various unnamed judges have in the past used him to pass on similar sentence deals to the defence. That such deals have been struck has long been the suspicion. Now thanks to a court of appeal ruling last year, and new legislation, plea bargains of sorts can be officially struck in open court, in writing and sanctioned by all parties.

Clearly it takes two to make a deal; and fearing that the appeal judges will blame them, rather the judge, the barristers who argue that they have to tell their clients of any options and offers made to them, have taken advice from the Bar's professional standards committee – just in case.

Chambers potty

IT IS rare indeed for our two top judges, the Lord Chief Justice and the Master of the Rolls, to sit together. So why last month did they both need to apply their judicial brains to something so apparently routine as a personal injury appeal? Could it have anything to do with the fact that m'learned friends at the Bar were in a right mess?

Ten years ago Peter Smith, now aged 50 and from Farnsfield, Mansfield, suffered serious head and leg injuries in a car crash in Thailand. The car belonged to his then employer, the Norwegian construction and engineering giant Kvaerner, and was being driven by one of its engineers' sons. Three others died in the accident, including the driver.

But at Chesterfield county court in 2001, Mr Smith lost his claim for damages against Kvaerner, because the judge ruled that the 21-year-old driver did not have company permission to drive the car – even though the company, when it made a claim for the accident from its Thai insurers, had claimed he was authorised to drive the car.

Mr Smith was represented by Dominic Nolan, from Ropewalk, Nottingham. Kvaerner was represented by Philip Turton, from the same chambers. The judge, barrister and recorder Ian McLaren QC was – and still is – head of those very same chambers. But crucially Judge McLaren QC had acted for and indeed still was acting for a Kvaerner group company.

Although Mr Smith was warned about this potential conflict by his barrister, Mr Nolan, and by the Recorder, Mr Nolan had given such a glowing account of his head of chamber's impartiality that Mr Smith did not feel he could seek an adjournment or a new judge.

Lord Phillips, the Lord Chief Justice (pictured), and Sir Anthony Clarke, the Master of the Rolls, and Lord Justice May decided that while there was no actual bias in the case, there was "the appearance of bias" – not only because the judge was the head of the two barristers' chambers, but also because he had connections with the defendant company.

Although they said Mr Smith was "badly let done by the system", there were no rapped knuckles for either the judge or Mr Nolan. The recorder should have explained himself better before the trial started and made clear to Mr Smith what his options were. It was also decided that while Mr Nolan had given inappropriate advice to his client about his head of chambers hearing the case, he had thought it was in his clients' best interests.

So, after his prolonged struggle, has Mr Smith finally won a new trial for damages against the company? Er, not quite. Kvaerner is to take the case to the House of Lords.

COUNTRYSIDE PROPERTIES

Clear and Prezza danger

HERE's a surprise: New Labour's favourite developer, Countryside Properties, has been officially revealed as dishonest, misleading and untruthful!

As Eye readers will recall, the company ("I know [them] very well – they do a good job" – John Prescott) had to apologise to residents in Rochdale last year for "miscommunications" over the amount of asbestos contamination at a site where it wanted to build 600 homes. The company said the 72-acre site contained "a notable absence of contamination"; but as Eye 1129 had proved, it was riddled with the stuff.

To counter the "sense of mistrust" created in the area, the company then sent out 50,000 copies of a glossy "Community Newsletter". Alas, this was a very dodgy dossier too. According to the Advertising Standards Authority, in fact, it was not only "misleading" but in breach of its code in areas of "substantiation," "honesty" and "truthfulness".

Nevertheless, Countryside Properties has pride of place among regeneration case studies on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website for its "eco-friendly" homebuilding; and the chairman Alan Cherry has been a member of the government's Urban Regeneration Taskforce and has sat on the board of the South East England Development Agency.

The most damning of the ASA's findings is that CP misrepresented what the government's Health and Safety Executive supposedly considers to be "safe" levels of asbestos contamination – not an easy thing to do, given that no "safe" soil guidance value for asbestos contamination exists.

The CP newsletter states: "The HSE have regarded concentrations of less than 0.01 per cent as 'safe'". This is not the case. The HSE has never issued guidelines for "safe" levels of asbestos in soil, although a report not endorsed by the HSE refers to "action levels" used to determine whether decontamination work is necessary, of 0.001 percent – a 10-fold difference. The developer described the incorrect figure as a "typographical error". But the ASA noted that it remained on its website after the brochure's "error" had been pointed out.

The ASA also ruled that the newsletter's claim regarding a pile of rubble on the site, nicknamed "crush", was misleading. It did not consider that tests to determine an "initial characterization" of the rubble were adequate evidence to substantiate the claim that "'Crush' is free of asbestos".

Ian Kelley, subsidiary managing director for Countryside Properties, promised that the next edition of his community newsletter would be "both accurate and informative". Perhaps he should get Prezza to write it for him.

WATERWORLD

What a shower

ARE the computers at the Consumer Council for Water (CCWater) to be gold plated? The new statutory body, which replaces WaterVoice, has signed a three-year ICT deal with Northgate Information Systems worth £750,000.

Northgate is to provide a "fully managed" service to upgrade and support all IT assets, including mobile computing, internet access, email, office software, security software and disaster recovery. But as CCWater has just 75 staff nationwide, that's a whopping £10,000 of equipment and support per employee!

CCWater chief Tony Smith's told the IT press he hoped remote working using mobile technology would "help rebalance staff workloads", but it's hard to see how he can justify spending around 5 percent of the watchdog's £5.7m annual budget on the IT system – the equivalent to what they plan to spend on consumer research.

You can contact the In the Back team on 020 7437 4017

WMD

Sabri rattling

THE recent revelations about Iraq's non-existent weapons of mass destruction (WMD) by Tyler Drumheller, former European CIA chief, received patchy and contradictory reporting in Britain.

Drumheller told CBS News that Iraqi Foreign Minister Naji Sabri (pictured), who had worked for the CIA in the run-up to the Iraq invasion, had made it clear before the war that his country had no WMD programme.

According to Drumheller, US President George Bush, Vice-President Dick Cheney and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had been very excited to hear of the CIA's "high-level penetration" of Iraq's government, but they all lost interest when the no-WMD news arrived because it didn't help their plan to invade and bring about regime change.

Some British newspapers reported Drumheller's revelations, but not the Times, Mail or Telegraph. (Indeed the Telegraph reported an earlier American story from NBC news that Naji Sabri had told the US that Saddam did have stockpiles of chemical weapons.) But the big embarrassing question is: did the British government know about Sabri's briefing?

The Foreign Office (FCO) refused to comment when the Eye asked if it had known about Sabri's briefing. But no answer either way would reflect well on Tony Blair's government.

The Butler and US senate reports make clear there were extensive intelligence discussions on Iraq across the Atlantic in the run-up to war. If the Blair government did know about Sabri's briefing, then it must have deliberately ignored inconvenient intelligence that pointed away from Saddam having an active WMD programme. If it did not know what Sabri had revealed, then the Bush administration was clearly not telling its closest ally in the Iraq war about its highest-level penetration of the Iraqi government. The French (who originally passed Sabri to the CIA) knew the US had an agent inside Saddam's cabinet; but British may have been kept in the dark.

The Butler report's discussion of the many "human intelligence" sources in the run-up to the war does not appear to contain a reference to Sabri, so it looks as if Bush kept Blair out of the loop. So much for the special relationship.

Drumheller, now retired but once the CIA's highest-placed officer in Europe, also said his organisation dealt with the false claims that Saddam was importing uranium from Niger in 2001. Even then the CIA felt the story "didn't hold together" and officers were surprised to see the claims keep resurfacing right up to the exposure of the crudely forged documents purporting to show Saddam's nuclear deal.

MOT COMPUTERISATION

Crash test dummies

THOUSANDS of garages were forced to issue old-fashioned paper MOT certificates after the new computerised service went fully live at the end of March and promptly collapsed.

Siemens Business Services admitted causing the crashes in the £230m system it provides to the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency. The firm said that the problems, which left many garages barely able to work and halved the number of tests carried out nationally on one day last month, were down to an "overrunning systems process".

Problems with the system's roll-out were reported in *Eye 1138*, last August, when the Retail Motor Industry Federation called for the project to be halted after a test brought more than 1,000 MOT testing businesses to a standstill.

SATANIC PANIC

The mything link

A SMALL network of doctors and therapists who believe in the existence of ritual abuse, formerly known as Satanic ritual abuse (see Eyes passim), has latched on to a relatively new theory in psychiatry and psychotherapy known as "dissociation" which is spreading fast across the UK.

They seem determined to revive the "Satanic panic" – the hunt for devil-worshipping paedophiles who go round sacrificing animals and sexually abusing children – which caused such mayhem in Nottingham, Rochdale, the Orkneys and most recently on the Scottish island of Lewis.

Ardent proponents of the ritual abuse myth help run the main organisation which represents therapists in the field of dissociation and have secured key slots to speak at a forthcoming series of conferences, seminars and training courses on the subject.

No doubt sincere in their convictions, the danger is they will influence delegates including professionals dealing with vulnerable children considered at risk of abuse and adults suffering from various forms of mental illness from anorexia and depression to self harm and drug or alcohol addiction.

Dissociation is said to be a psychological mechanism to block out memories and reduce the overwhelming distress caused by trauma. In extreme cases patients develop numerous personalities or "alters" so they can "switch" between them and escape the memories.

The term Dissociative Identity Disorder, (DID), was formerly known as Multiple Personality Disorder. It is linked to the theory of "attachment", in which trauma can apparently "disrupt our attachment bonds".

Only a minority of therapists who work in this field are believers in ritual abuse. But the Eye has discovered that some practitioners do share a belief in ritual abuse, despite the fact that numerous police investigations across the US and the UK have found no forensic evidence and a government inquiry in 1994 concluded it does not exist.

Three of the 13 committee members of the United Kingdom Society for the Study of Dissociation (UKSSD) are active promoters of the existence of ritual abuse.

A founder member and UK training co-ordinator is Sue Richardson, an early "recovered memory" therapist who now describes herself as an "attachment-based" psychotherapist, based in Middlesbrough.

Richardson was a key social worker involved in the Cleveland child abuse controversy in 1987 when more than 120 children were taken into care after they were wrongly diagnosed as having been sexually abused. She later joined forces with social workers from Nottingham – involved in the first Satanic panic – in a group called the European Network for Backlash Research to counter a growing public backlash against false allegations of child abuse. Richardson became a vocal believer in ritual abuse and is a regular conference speaker.

Other committee members listed on the UKSSD website include a psychotherapist from Bedford, described as a representative from the Trauma and Abuse Group (TAG), which is running training courses on "Ritual Abuse Awareness" and DID in September and October, and a paediatrician from Nottingham, representing Ritual Abuse Information Network and Support (RAINS), an organisation set up to support people who work with survivors of ritual abuse (see Satanic Panic, Eye 1153).

Dr Joan Coleman, a psychiatrist and co-ordinator of RAINS, claims to have talked to more than 600 professionals who have worked with survivors of "sadistic ritual abuse" and spoken with more than 200 victims (see Letters, Eye 1155).

Several of the forthcoming national conferences and training courses on dissociation and attachment theory feature sessions on ritual abuse. One of the speakers is Valerie Sinason, a psychoanalyst, child psychotherapist and director of the Clinic for Dissociative Studies in Harley Street, London. She is a member of the Centre for Attachment-based Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy (CAPP) with which she is co-organising a series of continuing professional development courses entitled Working with Dissociation in Clinical Practice Using an Attachment Perspective from April to July at a cost of £450 or £350 for members. As part of this series, in June Sinason is running a course on "Ritual Abuse and Secondary Traumatisation".

Sinason was also a key speaker at a seminar in London in February 2006 run by the International Attachment Network on the subject Cults, Attachment and Religion. Her topic was "Spiritual abuse, attachment and the family".

Sinason, author of a book Treating Survivors of Satanist Abuse, previously conducted research on "sadistic ritual abuse", funded by the Department of Health, in which she claimed to have interviewed 76 children and adults who made allegations involving sexual abuse and murder. In 2000 the Metropolitan police investigated her allegations but found no evidence.

In published interviews one of her usual themes is the difficulties faced by therapists having to deal with the general climate of disbelief in the existence of ritual abuse and the need to persuade practitioners and the public to accept its reality.

Richardson, Coleman and Sinason regularly collaborate. Coleman contributed a chapter on "Satanic cult practices" in Sinason's book, and they were the main participants in a research study on sexual and ritual abuse featured prominently on TAG's website.

In July next year Sinason and Richardson will be the main speakers at the national conference of TAG, a charity, whose steering group was set up by the Association of Christian Counsellors to provide training courses for counsellors working with survivors of ritual or extreme childhood abuse.

The initial Satanic panic, it should be noted, was spread by Evangelical Christians and therapists on the international conference circuit.

FOLLOW-UPS... FOLLOW-UPS... FOLLOW-

■ **CAFCASS:** The troubled family court service could be heading back to court itself over more plans to curtail the work and contracts of the self-employed guardians who work with the vulnerable children Cafcass is supposed to protect.

To meet the government's demand for a £1m cut in its overstretched budget, Cafcass chief executive Anthony Douglas is planning to balance his books by introducing fixed fees for cases – irrespective of their complexity – which is bound to affect the quality of service to the children. It can take time to win a child's confidence so they feel free to give their true views about their future care.

Douglas is also putting aside £300,000 for a "transformation fund", with three new bureaucrats on £45,000 a year each, to implement the changes. According to Cafcass's own figures, a care case costs an average £3,000; so that £300,000 might be better spent clearing the backlog of children in London whose lives are still in limbo as they await assessment.

It was the proposed restrictions on time spent on cases which led to the disastrous judicial review for Cafcass in its early days. If Douglas persists with his plans, lawyers acting for the staff and unions are threatening another.

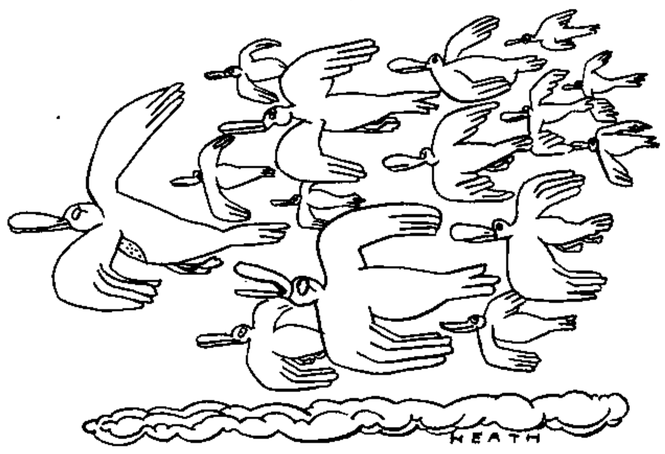
In the City

LORD Sebastian Coe, the former double Olympic gold medalist and leader of London's successful bid for the 2012 Games, appears to be running in fast company with a new business venture which has attracted an interesting cast of investors and advisers.

The Complete Leisure Group was formed last year and has been backed with some £900,000 put in by, among others, Coe's friend, the former Tory party leader and now shadow Foreign Secretary William Hague.

But it is the association with companies linked to Monaco-based promoter Peter Abbey that has raised City eyebrows. The Complete Leisure Group's registered office is at the same Great Cumberland Place address in London's Marble Arch as certain Abbey companies.

Abbey is well known to City regulators. He first came to notice with the spectacular flop Home Video Holdings in the early 1980s. During the 1990s the former dentist and his pal Tom Wilmot of Harvard Securities infamy featured in two of the more spectacular AIM flare-outs: Firecrest and Skynet.



"We all rather assumed that you knew where you were going"

Abbey's company, Detailprofit Trading, aka Abercorn Investments, ceased trading in 1997 but was pursued for £87,000 by Zebra Group, a company where Abbey had been a consultant promising to bring in deals for the suspended shell company. Abbey as ever denied all the claims but subsequently entered into a voluntary arrangement with his creditors and headed for Monte Carlo.

More recently, in 2003 Abbey and his Gibraltar company, Chiddingfold Investments, obtained control of three shell companies which had failed to do what it said on the tin. All three – Azure Holdings, Underwriting & Subscription and Prestige Publishing – had previously been operated on by Abbey associates without success. Azure and Prestige (now Matisse Holdings) were suspended last month, still shells. U&S (now Microcap Equities) is still there but a less-than-penny stock. Abbey and Chiddingfold have also done business with another colourful Monaco resident who bears an investor health warning – Paul Levinson.

For at least two years Abbey has been operating out of the Great Cumberland Place address with Berkeley Company Management (UK), which is owned by Berkeley (International) Group in Gibraltar. There are numerous other Berkeley companies with which Abbey is associated. And that is where his path and that of Sebastian Coe crossed several months ago.

The Complete Leisure Group began life last summer as Berkeley Services (No4), formed by Berkeley Company Management of Great Cumberland Place. Abbey is a director of Berkeley Services (No5) and No4's new life began in October just before Coe injected his own "business and assets" into the newly formed Sebastian Coe Limited, whose address was given as – yes, 1 Great Cumberland Place. The new Coe company was formed by the same team from Berkeley Company Management that had formed Berkeley Services (No4).

In late October some 1.2m shares in the then named Complete Sports Company were issued at 1p each to Coe (400,000), accountant Anthony Dix (400,000) and 399,000 to Berkeley Consultants of Gibraltar. Complete Sports gave its address as via Berkeley Company Management UK – director: Peter Abbey.

In December another 875,000 shares were issued in what was by January The Complete Leisure Group at 100p a pop – a big uplift for Coe and his two early bird investors, Dix and Abbey. Among the new investors was William Hague who bought 30,000. Abbey associates Nicolas Greenstone (director of Azure, Matisse and Microcap), and Laurence Davis and AIM-listed Niche Group took shares. Niche had close ties to Chiddingfold and Berkeley Consultants. Four Niche directors, including Greenstone, had links to Abbey and/or Levinson.

Leading soccer and sports agents First Artist Corporation took 100,000 shares. Another 100,000 went to Patrick Churchill from Monaco and to October Investments – a Gibraltar company.

The biggest investor, however, was private equity and advisory group Moore Clayton, founded by former Goldman Sachs investment banker Tony Moore, and whose advisory board includes another former top Tory – Lord Cecil Parkinson. Moore Clayton Company of Malibu, California, pumped in £225,000. Strangely, the address given for Moore Clayton Company – Moore Clayton itself has often been described as Malibu- or California-based while having a London office and FSA registration – turns out to be a mailbox rented from Mail Boxes Etc. Back in December it was announced that Moore Clayton & Co Inc (a Utah-based company) was planning its own flotation via the effective reverse takeover of Frankfurt-listed corporate financier IFEX. This was due to have been completed by last month but has still to happen. Part of the delay could be related to Moore Clayton's involvement in an investment with former Serious Farce Office target (missed) Alex Dann, who was acquitted in 1993 of fraud charges after it was held he had no case to answer.

CEO of Complete Leisure is Timothy Howland, who is a co-director with Coe on Sports Events Organisation and Sports Advisory & Consulting. Dix is also a director of these companies, which were both formed last year – by Berkeley Company Management. Howland was formerly involved with snooker, golf and ocean racing.

The word in Monaco and London among Abbey's circle was that Complete Leisure Group was certain to benefit from Coe's sporting and political connections and from his involvement in the 2012 Olympic Games. Exactly how is far from clear as Coe's position and reputation would most certainly preclude any inappropriate activity, benefit or potential conflict of interest. And surely he will be far too involved with the Olympics to pursue personal business interests.

Howland told the *Eye* that Complete Leisure Group was looking at a number of possibilities such as events, rights or publications. It also looks after Sebastian Coe Ltd, Coe's personal service company. "London 2012 is completely ring fenced. Everything has to be cleared or registered with the DCMS and the International Olympic Committee." Regarding Abbey, Howland said: "Peter has known Seb from way back when – probably through football, sport and charity. He introduced Seb to Philip Green." Green financed a film to support the London Olympic bid. "We asked Peter's advice when setting up the company. He is a shareholder and we don't see very much of him. Some people think he is a great guy, others think he is not such a great guy."

Still, it is puzzling why such a justly well-regarded public figure as Sebastian Coe is unwittingly associated with Peter Abbey, a man who is somewhat less well regarded. Considerably less. Doubtless the reason is that Lord Coe is completely unaware of Abbey's history.

SOLICITOR and self-proclaimed offshore expert Paul Baxendale-Walker has been suspended from practising following his role in the pillaging of the Balfron pension fund by jailed Danish conman Bjorn Steidl.

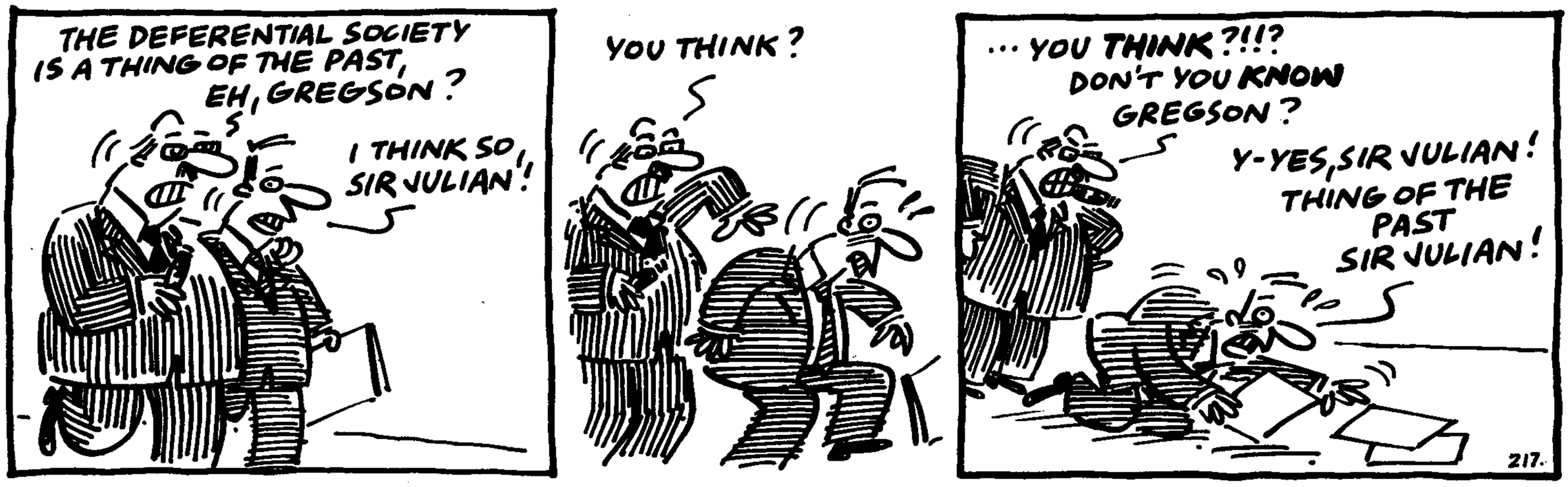
As set out in *Eye* 1153, Baxendale-Walker had initially been charged with Steidl by the SFO over the £2.1m fraud. But he was acquitted after the judge in a parallel civil case brought by the Balfron pension trustees decided Baxendale-Walker – whom he accused of lying under oath – had not acted dishonestly even though he had to repay his £50,000 fee. The criminal trial judge then decided the lawyer could not be tried – presumably in case a jury of lesser beings than a high court judge disagreed.

At the end of March the high court upheld the decision of the Solicitors' Disciplinary Tribunal made in April 2005 (but not made public until the recent court ruling) to suspend Baxendale-Walker for three years from May 2005. The tribunal held that he was guilty of conduct unbefitting a solicitor by providing a reference to a bank for a man he did not know and who in fact did not exist. Amazingly he was not found guilty of lying in the high court action – a ruling the Law Society in turn appealed.

Baxendale-Walker appealed against this suspension, which was why it was not made

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE & RIGG

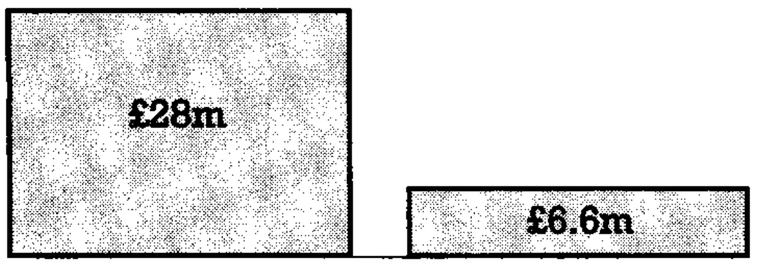

THE DEFERENTIAL SOCIETY IS A THING OF THE PAST, EH, GREGSON?
I THINK SO, SIR JULIAN!
YOU THINK?
... YOU THINK?!!? DON'T YOU KNOW GREGSON?
Y-YES, SIR JULIAN! THING OF THE PAST SIR JULIAN!
217.

Stock Horror

by 'Bruin'

iSoft's lucky boardroom

Value of shares sold in June 2005 by directors Patrick Cryne, Steve Graham, Tim Whitson and Ravi Kumar...



...What they sold them for

...What they're worth today

public by the tribunal or the Law Society, as an "onerous punishment". The tribunal decided, perhaps not altogether surprisingly, that writing the reference for a Canadian conman partner of Steidl whom he had never met or spoken to and who was using a false name was "improper and a serious breach of a solicitor's professional duty". He had been "at the very least extraordinarily reckless with regard to this professional duty". "Such behaviour on the part of a solicitor is wholly unacceptable and would not be permitted to go unmarked even where dishonesty was not alleged", the tribunal concluded.

Lord Justice Moses agreed wholeheartedly. Baxendale-Walker, he said , knew that Barclays was relying on him for a truthful reference. Instead "it received a fiction, on which it acted, which had no basis in fact... neither age nor experience should be needed to teach a solicitor what was obvious". "I agree that for a solicitor to write a reference about someone he has never met and about whom he knows nothing is a grave breach of his duty".

The judge also decided that the tribunal had been too lenient in ruling that the Law Society should pay 30 percent of Baxendale-Walker's costs before the tribunal. This followed the ruling in his favour about the perjury. The law Society dropped its appeal on this point after learning that Baxendale-Walker was to be suspended.

Lord Justice Moses declared that in the civil case Mr Justice Etherton had clearly decided that Baxendale-Walker had lied. Influenced by that, the high court reversed the tribunal ruling and decided instead that Baxendale-Walker should pay 60 percent of the Law Society's costs before the tribunal. "He brought these proceedings upon himself."

Doubtless Baxendale-Walker made the fact that he was appealing a three-year suspension known to the BBC when he appeared a month before the high court hearing in the documentary *No tax please, we're rich*. Or maybe not as there was no mention of the Steidl/Balfron scandal or the Law Society's decision.

BACK in December 2004 questions were raised here about the revenue recognition policies of iSoft, in particular regarding its IT software contract with the NHS. iSoft is one of the providers to the troubled £6bn electronic online patient records project. It had been suggested that iSoft's accounting techniques were too "aggressive" and that it was bringing forward much of the revenues expected from the NHS contract.

The shares then were 370p. Two profit warnings this year and the shares are now 100p. Auditor RSM Robson Rhodes has been replaced by Deloittes who made the "aggressive" criticisms in a due diligence report for rivals Torex ahead of its 2003 merger with iSoft. Standby for some restatement of not just the projected profits for 2006 but those of previous years, especially after the NHS refused to extend certain contracts. How fortunate were those iSoft directors such as Patrick Cryne and Stephen Graham who sold £40m worth of shares in 2004 at 425p and another tranche last year.

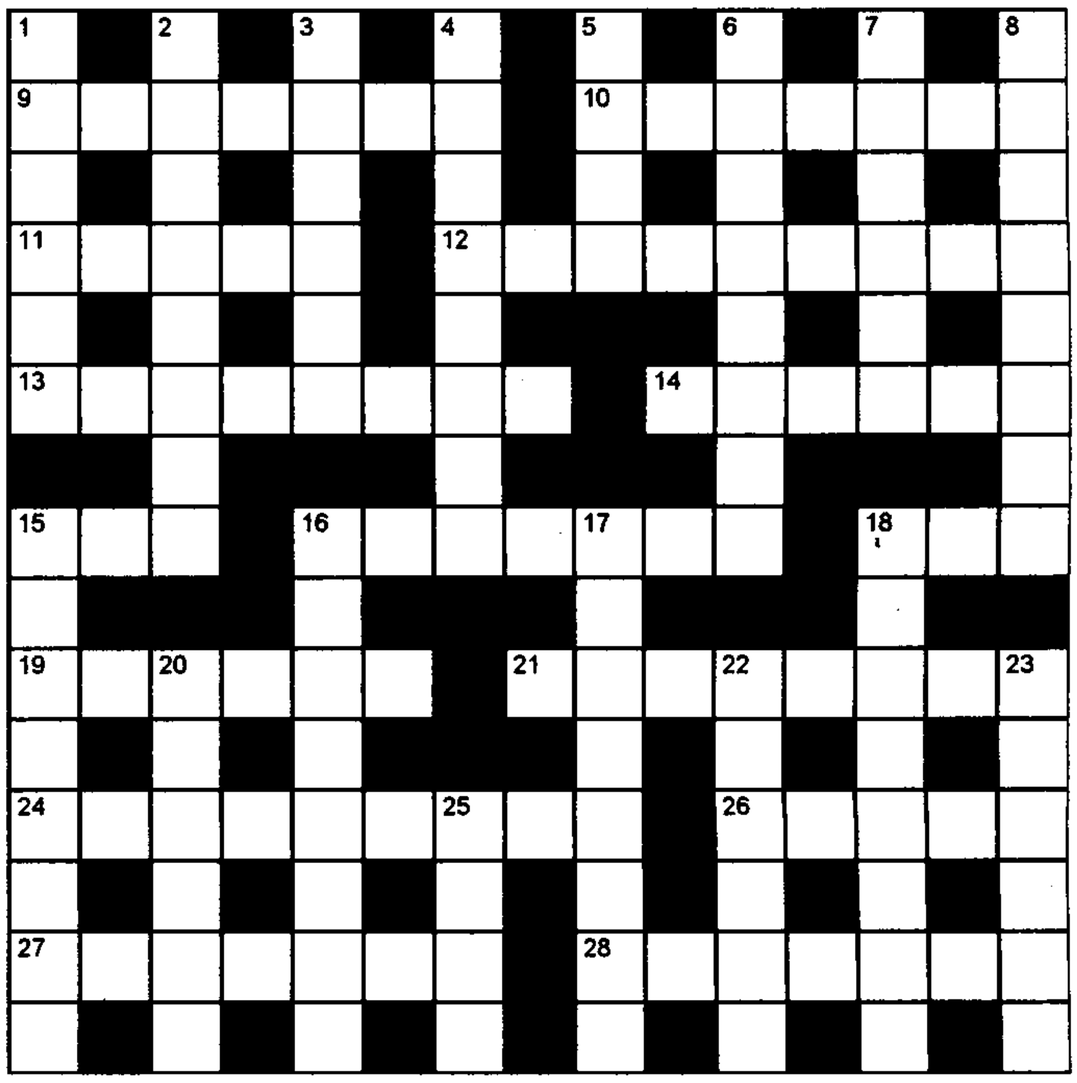
'Slicker'

EYE CROSSWORD 313

by Cyclops

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 19 May 2006

Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN or via email to crossword@private-eye.co.uk



ACROSS

9 Bill presented by small politician without dressing (7)
10 Ollie's rank, gutsy part, touching *Electra*'s top pair (7)
11 Piss artist, one like Lulu (5)
12 Crappy Beeb really lacks one as a corporation (4,5)
13/18ac./24 "Lost! Terrible defeat – wherefore, Lord?", as Bush imagines his global standing? (6,2,3,4,5)
14 One means of getting a rise out of King George entering by way of one (6)
15 See 27ac.
16 Knock off Teri Hatcher initially in hi-tech aircraft (7)
18 See 13ac.
19 Trendy, pisspoor arty stuff dominating the busy manager's desk? (2-4)
21 It's often not hard for a would-be stud to be this (8)
24 See 13ac.
26 Military unit that's stiff when getting end away (5)
27/15ac. The product of a fart's "bastard" talk? (7,3)
28 A hole, in a state, briefly describes Ken Livingstone's place, UK-wise (7)

DOWN

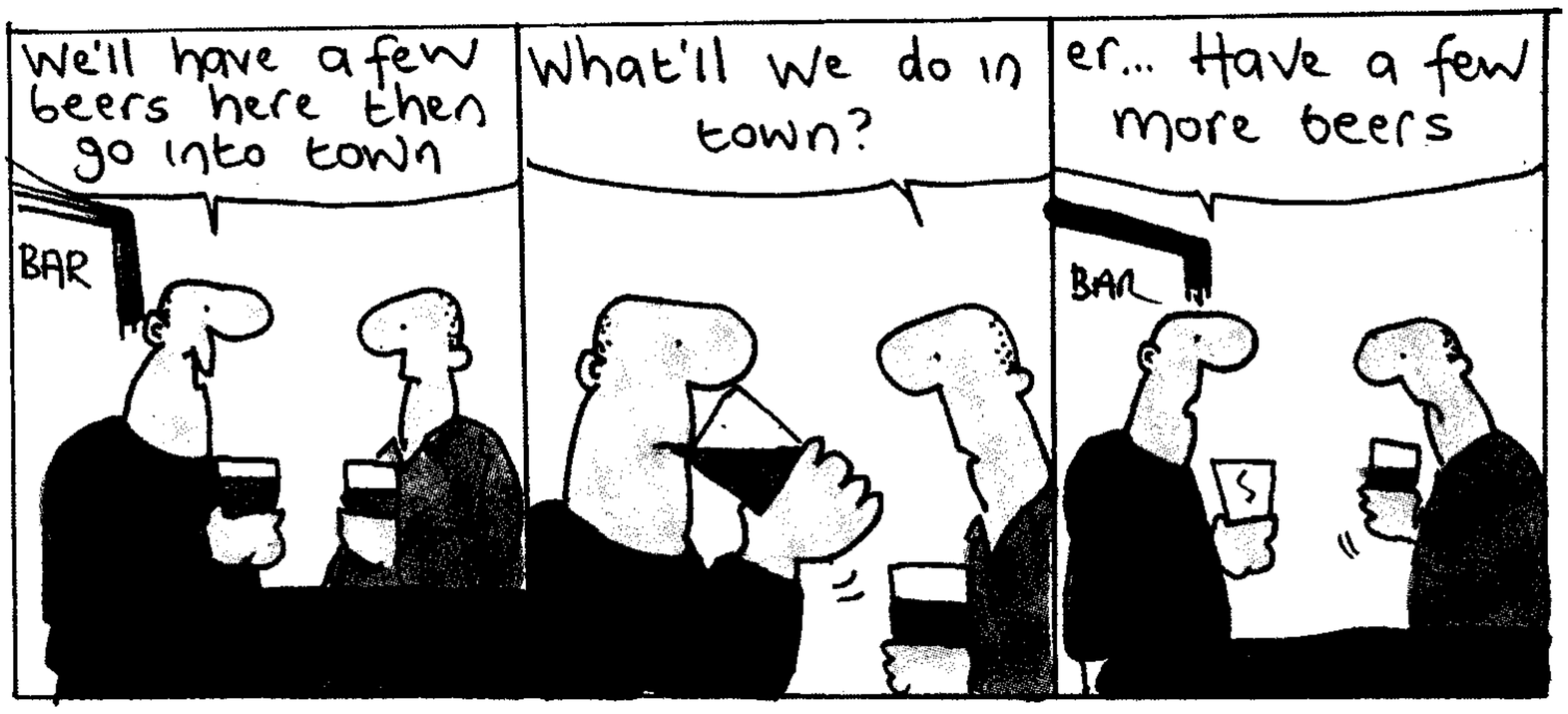
1 Old Bob to go in for the Order of the Brown Nose (makes terrible reading) (6)
2 Is an aggressive manager getting thrills with beastly carrier? (5,3)
3 Goddess Nigella's tip: "Cover wrinkly old chicken with titillatingly erotic starters" (6)
4 Roger gets up to a prank – Viz-type humour? (4,4)
5 Good cocaine, speed and Ecstasy – a doddle for our students? (4)
6 Slovenly, pissed journo's off, clutching filthy bib (8)
7 Angola's buggered, like a traditional watch, US-style (6)
8 President's just started to screw dull English "game ally" (8)
15 Groin's a-tremble, cuddling very forceful, fabulous creatures (8)
16 Was Starr out to get Ronald's defence strategy? (4,4)
17 Impotent Liberal politician's outside interest: to join *Private Eye* (4-4)
18 Article on revolutionaries' uncontrollable movements (3,5)
20 Maastricht? Go stuff yourself inside! (6)
22 Love a certain bra size with lacy edge to hold (6)
23 Battle – let's split without America! (6)
25 For whom Brenda sat in arse-over-tip state (4)

Crossword 312 winner: WILLIAM CAMPBELL

ACROSS: 6 Puffy 9 Homer 10 Just fancy 11/1A/25 Anti-social Behaviour Order 12 Plus 14 In ruins 16 Exhibit 18 Gumboil 21 Swansea 23 Oust 24 Guillotine 27 Turbulent 28 Drool 29 Fit up 30 Superstar.

DOWN: 1 Beheading 2 Hamster 3 Virus 4 Objects 5 Restate 7 Fan club 8 Yo-yos 13 Shia 17 Traveller 19 Muskrat 20 Laurels 21 Split up 22 Spin out 23/6 Out of puff 26/15 Pump iron.

HUSBAND

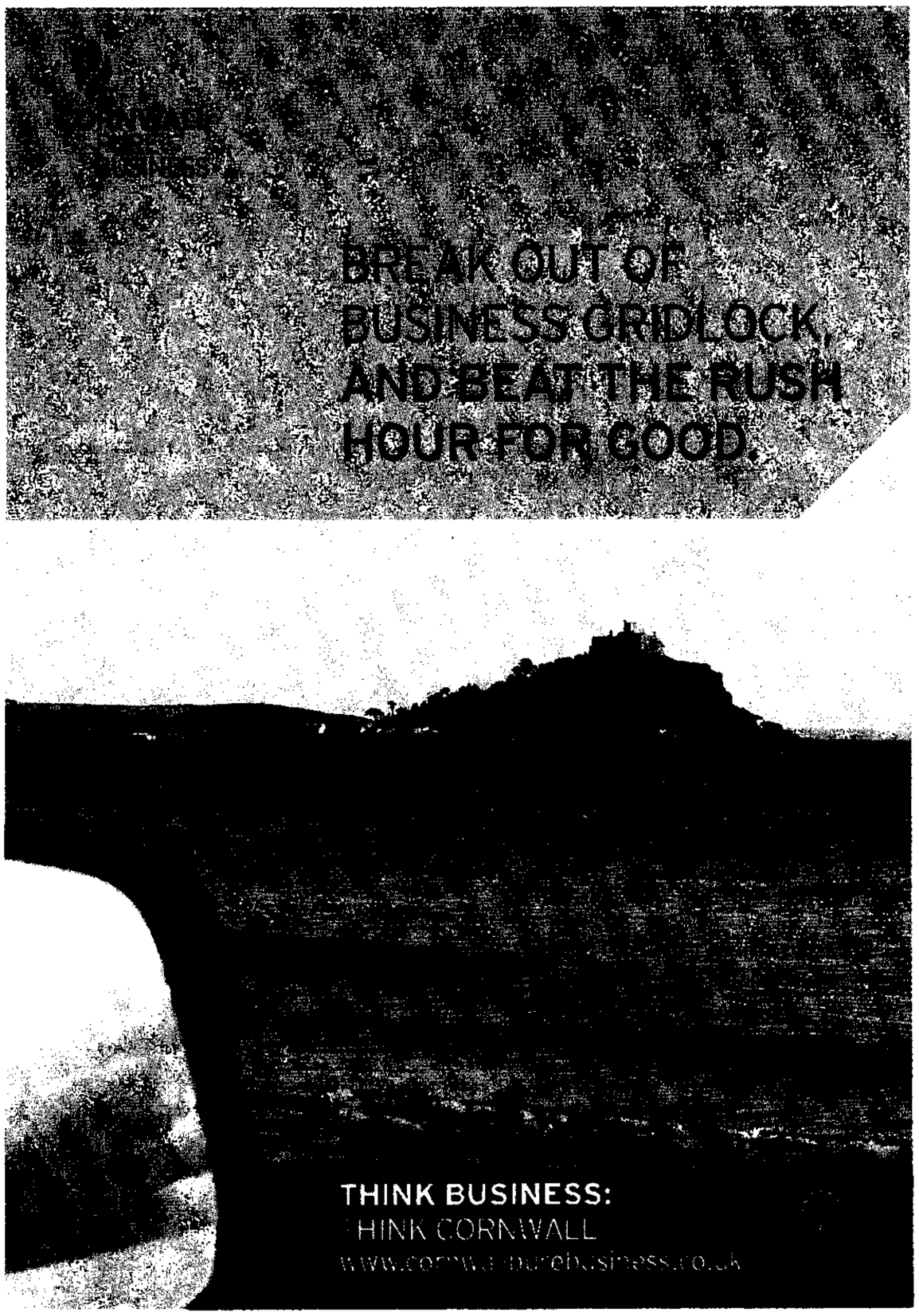


Spending too much time in the airport?

check-in, choose your seat and print your boarding card at flybmi.com

bmi

for full details visit flybmi.com



Does your pool go green?

HAVE A CRYSTAL CLEAR POOL ALL YEAR ROUND AND SAVE 80% ON CHEMICAL COSTS.

floatron® converts pool and pond water into sparkling healthy mineral water in which algae and bacteria cannot thrive.

With **floatron®** there is no bleached hair, stinging eyes, damage to the environment or other problems associated with Chlorine usage.

floatron® costs nothing to power and operate. It is unobtrusive and portable - only the size of a frisbee.

Help the environment & your swimmers
Contact: Floatron UK
Telephone: 01256 770246
Email: info@floatron.co.uk
Web: www.floatron.co.uk

floatron®

What would you borrow?
Have you always wanted to try on Miss Haversham's wedding dress, view the world through a Big Brother telescreen or shrink to the size of Alice in Wonderland? Every Object Tells A Story is inviting budding writers to tell a story about an object from literature that they would like to borrow.
The winning story will be printed on bookmarks and distributed to bookshops around the country, so thousands of fellow booklovers will be able to read your tale.
Submit your entry at
Entrants must be at least 16 years old.
Stories are around 150 words.
Competition closes 5 June 2006.
V&A
4
ULTRALAB
culture

Swim At Home

FREE DVD

The Treadmill for Swimmers!

Swim against a smooth current adjustable to any speed or ability. Ideal for exercise, water aerobics, rehabilitation and fun. Just 8' x 15', an **Endless Pool®** is simple to maintain, economical to run, and easy to install inside or out. Discover the perfect pool for the British climate!

Already own a pool? Ask about the FASTLANE

For a FREE DVD or Video Call:
UK 0800 028 1056, ext. 5005
IRL 1 800 557 810, ext. 5005
www.endlesspools.co.uk/5005

BIRTHDAY NEWSPAPERS

Births, Birthdays, Weddings, Christenings, Anniversaries, Retirements. Papers from archives 1642-2003. Sundays from 1915. Quality presentations. Same day dispatch.

REMEMBER WHEN
445 Brighton Road,
Croydon, Surrey CR2 6EU
www.remember-when.co.uk

020 8763 6363
or call FREE 0500 520 000

Have you got room to express yourself?

garden retreat or simply more space to work or relax.

T: 01949 860 482
E: info@garden-studios.com

garden studios

www.garden-studios.com

Retain the regular use of The Book of Common Prayer by joining the PRAYER BOOK SOCIETY

PBS Prayer Book Society

www.prayerbook.org.uk
Tel: 01189 842582
Reg. charity no. 1099295
Company Limited by Guarantee No. 4786973

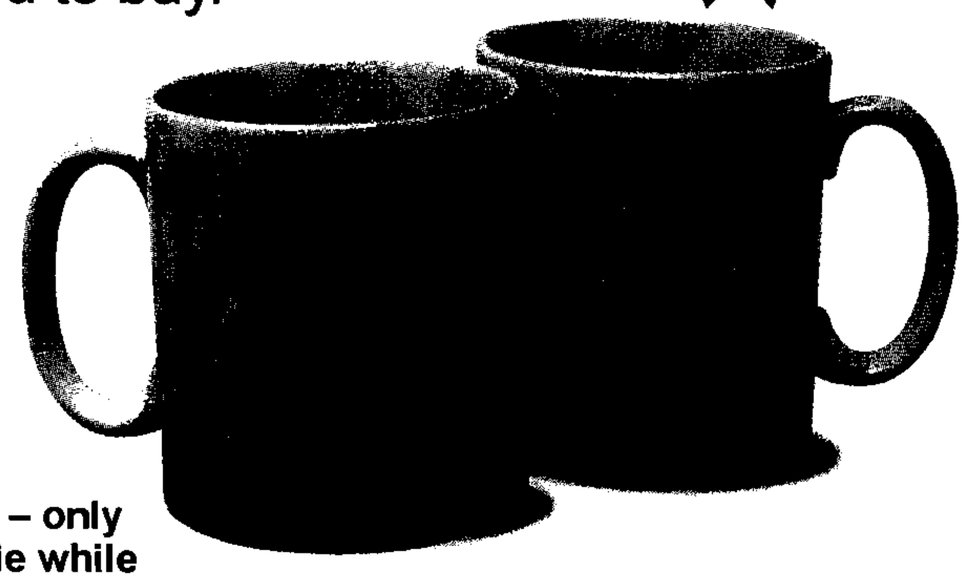
WE COPY TO **DVD & VHS**
CINE FILMS AND SLIDES
CAMCORDER, BETAMAX, VHS TAPES & POLAVISION
FREE TRIAL OFFER
CAMCORDER & AUDIO TAPE REPAIRS
REEL TO REEL AUDIO & CASS'T TO CD
FOREIGN VIDEOS CONVERTED
FREE INFO. PACK
TEL.01454 772857
Memories On Video, 24 York Gdns, Winterbourne, Bristol.BS36 1QT
OR VISIT www.movid.co.uk

Lost out due to bad advice?
Why don't you sue your accountant/solicitor/surveyor
Contact: GORVINS on 0800 015 9986 or email enquiries@gorvins.com

A PRIVATE EYE MUG MAKES A GREAT GIFT

To celebrate the Eye's 45th birthday we have produced an exclusive **PRIVATE EYE MUG** for you to buy.

ONLY £5.99 incl. p&p



HURRY – only available while stocks last!

To order your earthenware mug call

The credit card hotline:
0870 750 1714 / 01795 414 870
or order online at: www.private-eye.co.uk

Andante TRAVELS

The ancient world through expert eyes

Prehistoric rock art in the Libyan desert, walking through ancient Wessex, Iron Age bog bodies in Denmark, Classical temples in Greece, Buddhist shrines in Sri Lanka, houses of Roman Italy, Maya pyramids in the Mexican jungle, Medieval churches, and much more...

- ❖ Archaeology and ancient history holidays, in style and comfort
- ❖ Unusual, little-known sites, as well as the must-see highlights
- ❖ The best lecturers and comprehensive field notes
- ❖ Fully inclusive tours, or Bare Bones holidays with greater independence

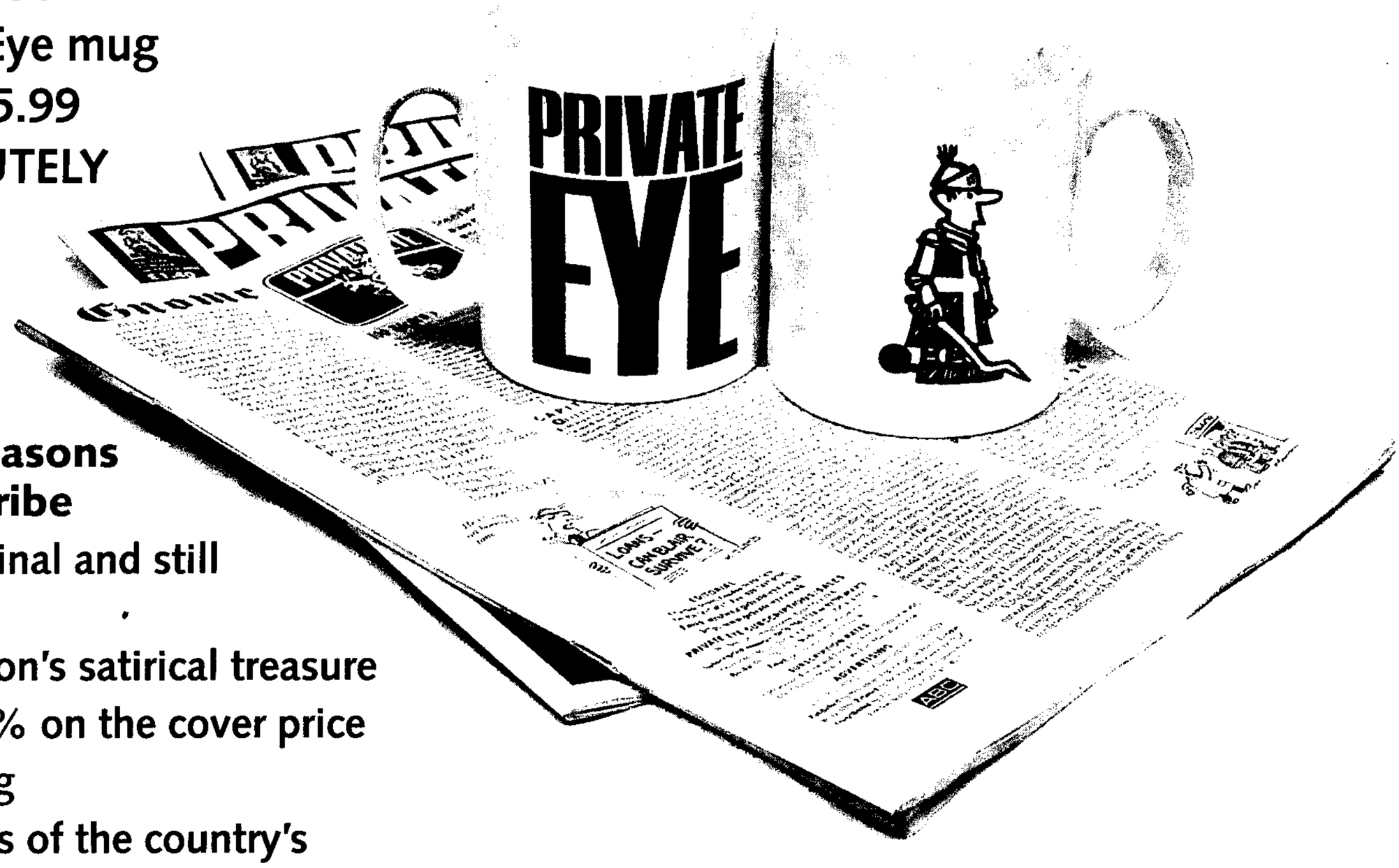
Call for a brochure or visit our website

AITO THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT TOUR OPERATORS

01722 713800
www.andantetravels.co.uk

Celebrate our **45th birthday** with this amazing subscription offer

Subscribe to Private Eye for just £24 and receive an EXCLUSIVE Private Eye mug worth £5.99 ABSOLUTELY FREE!



Great Reasons to subscribe

- The original and still the best
- The nation's satirical treasure
- Save 34% on the cover price
- Free mug
- 26 issues of the country's best-selling news and current affairs magazine

Subscribing is easy:

Visit: www.private-eye.co.uk Call now: HOTLINE 0870 750 1714 / 01795 414 870

Complete the order form below

Hurry – our earthenware mugs are very popular. Offer available whilst stock last

Please allow 15 days for delivery of the mug.

COMPLETE THIS ORDER FORM AND SEND TO: PRIVATE EYE SUBSCRIPTIONS, P.O. BOX 326, SITTINGBOURNE, KENT, ME9 8FA

☐ YES, I would like to subscribe to Private Eye and receive a FREE Private Eye mug (offer is for UK only)

Rates:
One year (26 issues): UK £24

Your details

Title Initial Surname

Address

Postcode

Telephone Mobile

Email

Recipient details (for gift subscriptions)

Title Initial Surname

Address

Postcode

Telephone Mobile

Payment method

☐ I enclose a cheque for £_____ (payable to PRIVATE EYE)

☐ Direct Debit – just call 0870 750 1714 with your bank details or

☐ MasterCard / Visa / Switch (issue no:)

Card number

☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐ Switch only

Expiry date ☐☐☐☐

Signature _____

☐ Yes, I would like to receive news of other products and services from Private Eye.

Source code: N1158

Morgan

WAREHOUSE SURPLUS OUTLET

MAIL ORDER SALES LINE
0870 126 4831
www.morgancomputers.co.uk

Stores in London, Birmingham and Manchester.
See below for store locations/opening hours.

TOSHIBA SATELLITE PRO L20

Stylish notebook with DVD re-writer drive and 128MB ATi X200 graphics.

- **Intel Celeron-M 370 (1.5GHz) chip**
- **512MB DDR RAM, 40GB hard drive**
- **Superb 15" TFT colour screen**
- **56K/LAN/WiFi, Win XP Home Ed.**

Stock status: Brand new stock
Warranty: 1 year International warranty

£369.99 ex VAT **£434.74** inc VAT

TOSHIBA

EMACHINES 2.93GHZ PC

Home office/family PC with DVD re-writer, Win XP and Works 8.0

- **Intel Pentium 4 516 processor**
- **256MB RAM, 80GB hard drive**
- **16x DL DVD±RW, 5.1 audio**
- **Internet keyboard & mouse**

Stock status: Factory refurb stock
Warranty: 6 month warranty

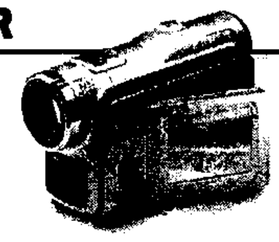
£269.99 ex VAT **£317.24** inc VAT

emachines

SAMSUNG CAMCORDER

- **Mini-DV handheld digi camcorder**
- **Superb 16x optical zoom lens**
- **Optical viewfinder/2.5" colour LCD**

Factory refurb, 6 month warranty



£99.99 ex VAT **£117.49** inc VAT

WIRELESS OPTICAL MOUSE

- **Labtec 3 button wireless mouse**
- **800 dpi provides for high sensitivity**
- **Compact receiver - PS/2 connection**

Brand new stock, 1 year warranty

£5.99 ex VAT **£7.04** inc VAT

DV-10 HOME CINEMA PROJECTOR

Projector with integrated DVD, simply plug it in, pop in a DVD & point at a wall.

- **Optoma MovieTime DV10 projector**
- **Integral DVD Player and speakers**
- **4000:1 contrast ratio, 1000 lumens**
- **Component, S-video & VGA ports**

Stock status: Brand new stock
Warranty: 2 year Optoma warranty

£579.99 ex VAT **£681.49** inc VAT

MSI USB FREEVIEW TV TUNER

- **Watch free-to-air TV on your PC**
- **USB interface - no PSU required**
- **Includes infrared remote control**

Brand new stock, 1 year warranty

£29.99 ex VAT **£35.24** inc VAT

KINGSTON 1GB SD CARD

- **High quality branded media card**
- **Suitable for cameras/MP3s etc**
- **Full range of CF/MMC etc avail**

Brand new stock, lifetime warranty

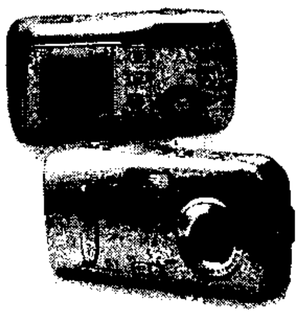
£19.99 ex VAT **£23.49** inc VAT

OLYMPUS CAMEDIA D-435

5 megapixel camera, 4x digital zoom & 1.5" LCD colour screen.

- **Various scene shooting modes**
- **Optical viewfinder/LCD screen**
- **Movie clip capture with sound**
- **14Mb memory, accepts SD**

Stock status: Factory refurbished
Warranty: 6 month Olympus wty



£42.54 ex VAT **£49.99** inc VAT

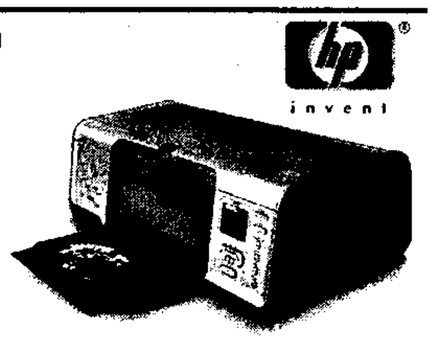
OLYMPUS

HP PHOTOSMART 8050 PRINTER

High resolution photo printer with built-in card reader and LCD screen.

- **Photo quality 4800 dpi resolution**
- **Up to 30ppm mono/20ppm colour**
- **Prints straight from card - no PC req**
- **USB port, PictBridge compatible**

Stock status: Brand new stock
Warranty: 1 year HP warranty



£49.99 ex VAT **£58.74** inc VAT

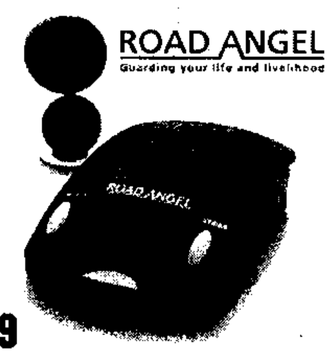
vivera HP INKS

ROAD ANGEL CLASSIC

In-car speed camera detection device and road safety system.

- **Detects accident blackspots**
- **Recognises Gatso, Truvelo, SPECS and mobile cameras**
- **Visual and audible alerts**

Stock status: Brand new stock
Warranty: 1 year warranty



£99.99 ex VAT **£117.49** inc VAT

LOGITECH QUICKCAM ZOOM

- **Logitech 640 x 480 USB webcam**
- **Ideal for video messaging etc**
- **Features face tracking technology**

Brand new , 2 year Logitech warranty

£19.99 ex VAT **£23.49** inc VAT

MINOLTA 35MM SLR CAMERA

- **Minolta Dynax 404Si SLR camera**
- **Pop-up flash, auto/manual modes**
- **Inc 35-80mm 3.5-5.6 zoom lens**

Factory refurb, 6 month warranty

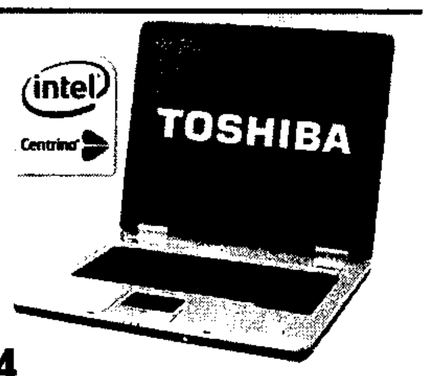
£49.99 ex VAT **£58.74** inc VAT

TOSHIBA SATELLITE PRO L20

Slimline notebook with double layer DVD burner and integrated WiFi (11g).

- **Intel Pentium-M 740 (1.73GHz) chip**
- **512MB DDR RAM, 40GB hard drive**
- **15" XGA TFT, up to 64MB graphics**
- **56K/LAN/WiFi, Win XP Home Ed.**

Stock status: Brand new stock
Warranty: 1 year International warranty



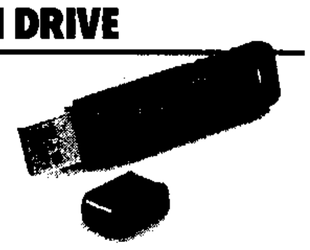
£469.99 ex VAT **£552.24** inc VAT

TOSHIBA

CN MEMORY 2GB FLASH DRIVE

- **Massive storage, slimline casing**
- **Ideal for backups and data transfers**
- **Hi speed USB 2.0, up to 480Mbps**

Brand new stock, 5 year warranty



£29.99 ex VAT **£35.24** inc VAT

AIGO 512M MP3 PLAYER WITH LCD

- **Compact 512MB Aigo IMP 200**
- **Built-in digital voice recorder**
- **8 hours use from 1 x AAA battery**

Factory re-work, 1 year warranty

£19.99 ex VAT **£23.49** inc VAT

HP WIFI INKJET PRINTER

Deskjet 6840 colour printer with USB, Ethernet and WiFi interface.

- **Max 30ppm mono/20ppm col**
- **4800 dpi res photo printing**
- **PictBridge enabled USB port**
- **Incl double sided printing unit**

Stock status: Factory rework stock
Warranty: 1 yr collect/return wty

£79.99 ex VAT **£93.99** inc VAT

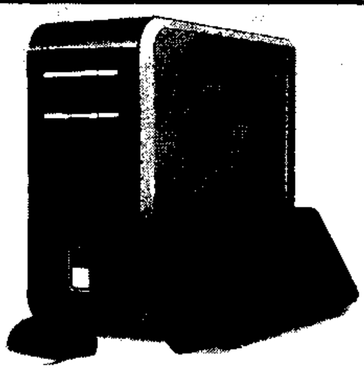
WiFi CERTIFIED

FAMOUS BRAND 3GHz DESKTOP

Household brand desktop PC with 1GB DDR RAM and 256MB nVidia graphics.

- **Intel Pentium 4 3.06GHz processor**
- **1GB RAM, 160GB SATA hard drive**
- **DVD±R/RW, 256MB 6200 graphics**
- **Micorsoft Windows XP Home**

Stock status: Factory refurb stock
Warranty: 1 year on-site warranty



£329.99 ex VAT **£387.74** inc VAT

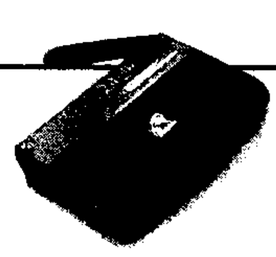
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT ON ANY SALE OVER £400

SUBJECT TO STATUS, OVER 18'S, WRITTEN QUOTE UPON REQUEST

LINKSYS USB 11B WIFI

- **Free yourself of messy cables**
- **Share files/Broadband over WiFi**
- **11b interface, up to 100m range**

Brand new, 1 year warranty



£7.99 ex VAT **£9.39** inc VAT

TO HAVE A FREE COPY OF OUR FLYER DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR EVERY MONTH PLEASE CALL 0870 126 4831

CENTRAL LONDON
64-72 New Oxford Street
London WC1A 1AX
Tel 020 7255 2115
Fax 020 7436 6285

GREENFORD
Unit 25 Derby Road
Metropolitan Ctr UB6 8UJ
Tel 020 8575 0055
Fax 020 8575 7985

BIRMINGHAM
34 Edgbaston Centre, Hagley Road, Birmingham B16 8SH
Tel 0121 452 1141
Fax 0121 455 6855

MANCHESTER
Unit 11-12 Station Approach
Manchester M1 2GH
Tel 0161 237 1111
Fax 0161 237 3146

Monday-Friday (New Oxford St) 9.00am-5.30pm (10:00am - 6:30pm)
Saturday (New Oxford St) 9.00am-5.00pm (10:00am - 6:00pm)
Sunday (New Oxford St) 10.00am-4.00pm open 'til 6:00pm)

AMERICAN EXPRESS Maestro MasterCard VISA

Stock & prices subject to change. E&OE

Classified: 020 7240 9129

Email:private-eye@mcmslondon.co.uk Fax: 020 7379 7118

£2.60 per word (£26 min charge). Centred box £15. Box number £15. All charges VAT inclusive.
Reply to Box number at: Private Eye, McMillan-Scott, 9 Savoy Street, London WC2E 7HR.

Copy date for 26 May issue will be 1pm, Tuesday 16 May

AWARD-WINNING PRISON ARTIST seeks posh, wealthy pen friends to possibly sell work to! Minimal abstracts. Reply Box 163138.

WOW! www.scapesandstills.co.uk Purchase prints of striking still life and landscape photography online.

www.artgallery.co.uk Buy stunning original art online at great prices.

LOBSTER every Friday night at www.pariscasinoblackpool.co.uk

PUKKA PYJAMAS AND NIGHTSHIRTS for men, women and boys. www.pukkapyjamas.co.uk

FAT MEN are harder to kidnap and why does the nutter always sit next to me? For these t-shirts and many others check out www.tchest.co.uk

ARE YOU STYLISH? Cheap Date Guide To Style needs photo of you in outfit that most closely defines your style / panache. Tell your stylish pals too, please! Email to cheap.date@zem.co.uk and be in very cool book.

£250 + FREE BETS. Compare odds from 20 bookmakers @ www.bookies.com

ROULETTE: proven successful system / strategy for serious players. Tel: 07799 777 475.

IOU THIEF? Stop backing donkeys! Every loser wins at www.LayFair.com

DELICIOUS WEST COUNTRY LADY seeks intelligent guy 50 +. Enjoys walking, Classic cars, motorcycles, wine, art and romantic weekends. Reply Box 163159.

TALL, ENERGETIC, intelligent, but bored businessman (43) seeks attractive, slim, unappreciated female soul mate (25-35) to spoil in passionate long-term affair. Based East Yorkshire. loadsasmiles@hotmail.co.uk

MALE, 52, INTELLIGENT, cultured but slightly mad, see www.faceparty.com/manfromberks

ATTRACTIVE LADY, late 50s Bristol area enjoys country walks, cinema, theatre and jazz seeks man to share interests. Reply Box 163169.

COULD YOU BE HE? Are you 50-60 and crave a new life? I'm a happy, financially independent female. Busy, with plenty of friends but need an articulate man to share my interesting life, tlc, home cooking, lovely house (Herts). You will never again get this chance for a fresh start so send me your phone number and let's talk. Reply Box 163830.

ATTRACTIVE PROFESSIONAL female, 47, seeks similar male to share wholesome long-term relationship. London. Reply Box 163647.

GIFTS FOR THE REDHEAD in your life – www.redandproud.com – Tel: 01844 274 635.

"IT'S AN AMAZING SITE" – Angus, London www.gizmoandwidget.com Shopping for fun!

www.giftperfect.co.uk Last minute present problems? Check Gift Perfect for next day mailing.

RUSSIAN AUTOMATIC WATCHES. Catalogue available (0115) 982 7741. Or visit www.russia4u.co.uk

GET GREAT GIFTS, gadgets and games at: WWW.NAFFGIFTS.CO.UK

NEWSPAPER the day they were born, plus free old copy of Private Eye! £19. Tel: 01492 531 195.

CAPE TOWN: Two-bedroom apartment directly on the beach overlooking Table Mountain, five minutes to waterfront. www.capetownbeachapartment.com

TENERIFE, LAS AMERICAS: Apartment in 3-star hotel on sea front. Quiet area, golf near by, from £75 pppw. Tel: 01803 526 168.

GREAT VALUE: newly restored luxury Farmhouse in Umbria, near Assisi and Gubbio. www.italian-holidays-ltd.com

LUXURY VILLA near Marbella, sea views, private pool, see www.villascostadelsol.net

CRETE: Beautiful air-conditioned apartments next to sandy beach. www.cretansun.com

CRUISE AWAY FROM THE MASSES. Email your cruise ideas – I will find reality. For singles, romantics, even intellectuals. hills@gocruisedirect.co.uk (ABTA/ATOL)

DEVON/CORNWALL BORDER. Sympathetically converted barn on organic farm. Sleeps 5. www.westchillafarm.co.uk

EXPERIENCED THE MALVERNS YET? Clear air, pure water and sheer enjoyment. Colwall Park Hotel in the Malvern Hills – Restaurant of the Year and AA Courtesy & Care Awards. Gourmet breaks from £85.00 pppn 2+ nights. Tel: 01684 540000. www.colwall.com

ITALY, CINQUE TERRE – a small inn perched on the hills overlooking the sea: www.lasosta.com Romantic and charming.

ESCAPE TO THE SUN: our luxurious self-catering cottage sleeps 4, and is situated in a quiet rural village in south-west France. It is within easy reach of La Rochelle, Cognac, the Atlantic coast and a wealth of historic sites. Email: rcm@rspl.co.uk Tel: 00 33 5 46 26 10 33.

BLAKENEY. Listed house / walled garden. Sleeps 7 – 2 bathrooms. Stunning position – enormous marsh views – harbour 75 yards. Some weeks available June / July / September / October. marrisdc@aol.com Tel: 01692 535 658.

CROATIA HOLIDAY LET: Beautiful cottage in coastal village. Sleeps 4. Telephone: Tony and Orsam on 020 8519 9424. samantha.taylor@tesco.net

LE MARCHE/ITALY: Medieval tower or 18th Century farmhouse to rent. www.twohavens.it

LA MANGA CLUB: Three-bedroom holiday villa available for rent. www.lamangaholidays.net

SOUTH TURKISH COAST: Idyllic hideaway overlooking Mediterranean that sleeps 2 or 4: £150 to £250 per week. Email: Kaptanjune@gmail.com Tel: (90) 533 443 1739.

SPEECHLESS? Call Brian Jenner, humorous corporate speechwriter and coach. www.brianjenner.com Tel: 08458 380 395.

BANKRUPTCY ASSOCIATION: Established 1983. Books and advice on bankruptcy: www.theba.org.uk

TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE: Confidence, relationships, career. Professional life coach. www.elspethreid.com. Tel: 020 8879 7676.

PROBLEM AT WORK? Sympathetic, comprehensive guidance and support. Tel: 01273 326 822. www.workclarity.com

SPEECHWRITING: original, personalised, topical; BBC comedy scriptwriter / speaker / corporate speaking coach. www.nickrthomas.com Tel: 01202 318 829.

NEW WEBSITE: read independent reviews and get recommendations at www.book-worm.biz

UNASHAMED EROTICIST seeks like-minded readers. PLAYING WITH FIRE by Harriet Crook. www.amazon.co.uk

CHOOSE THE NEWS and express your views at www.punchycomment.com

COMPLETE VOLUMES of National Geographics, 1970-2000. Offers? Must collect! Tel: 01778 560 515.

BRAIN FOR HIRE! Excellent business back-up available for start-ups to major corporates. Reasonable rates, good skills in marketing, sales, business planning, finance generation and strategy. Hands-on experience if needed, or just someone to kick ideas around. South-east based. Tel: 01273 732 277. steve.ross@thethirdhand.co.uk

SELL YOUR HOME
and stay in it

Freephone 0800 169 5723

for a brochure on the simple new alternative to equity release

I HELP PEOPLE MAKE MONEY: www.johnpassmore.co.uk

ENTREPRENEUR requires venture capital for present and future projects. See also: www.piperatthegatesofdawn.co.uk Contact: invest@piperatthegatesofdawn.co.uk

Mr. RUPERT YOUNGER hereby announces his resignation from The Buffalo Club.

CHANGE OF COURSE? www.bedroombookies.com Join us and make a mint.

Eye Sell

ANTIQUE PERSIAN CARPETS: 100 room size 250 rugs. Repairs, cleaning, established 40 years. Hadlow, Kent. Tel: 01732 850 228.

OLD PERSIAN RUGS – mostly £100-£3000. Shed not shop – telephone first. DESMOND NORTH, East Peckham, Kent. Telephone: 01622 871 353.

WE DON'T NEED party whips to keep our prices in line. For expert advice on hi-fi, home cinema and flat screen TVs and the UK's cheapest prices... Guaranteed, check out Richer Sounds! Call 0845 900 1230 for your nearest store or check out www.richersounds.com

WHITEN YOUR TEETH at home! We sell professional tooth-whitening kits, retail £250, was £59.99, NOW ONLY £24.99, simply order ONLINE today. www.happysmileuk.com / www.dentalxl.co.uk Tel: 020 7298 6117.

MOBILE PHONE salesmen got you baffled? Better deals online: www.delefonica.co.uk

CUT GLOBAL WARMING at bath time! Solar water heating? Solartwin's zero carbon design is the greenest. Get a Solartwin quote by phone: 0845 1300 137 (24h).

EYES 275 TO DATE: Some missing. Offers. For details email i.roper1@btinternet.com

Eye Say

MI5 TRIED TO KILL ME on 17 November/2001 – www.mi5.com/evidence/#ds

STOP ID-CARDS and the database state. Big cheques please: NO2ID, Box 412(PE), 78 Marylebone High St, LONDON W1. www.no2id.net

JUST LOOK AT THIS, www.thebigcashsecret.com

CAPITAINE. S.O.S. I need your help. Sous-Fifre.

TEXT2: FREE TEXTING, no strings. More at www.tex2me.co

MANY THANKS TO ST JUDE for prayers answered. JM.

Eye Need

EX-PUBLIC SCHOOLBOY, 41. Wife stole children. Broken man. Need money to start again. Halifax, S/C: 11-05-02. A/C: 00289500.

BLIMEY, I am so bored with corporate lies and nonsense! Need lots of cash to buy yacht and live life. Please help – thanks. NatWest, S/C: 54-21-50. A/C: 05561485.

DIVORCED FATHER of two needs help to keep kids healthy and happy. Just £1 from every reader buys a future. S/C: 07-01-16. A/C: 28389862.

NEWBIE FREELANCER needs money to get to Haiti. Need training first. £3k required. Lloyds TSB, S/C: 30-95-21. A/C: 01492783.

PRETTY IMPOVERISHED single mother needs to build extraordinary Chinese house in Highland bog. S/C: 80-11-05. A/C: 00543266.

AIRCRAFT ENGINEER has had tools stolen. Can't work without them; £5k to get me working again. ABBEY, S/C: 09-01-26. A/C: 36427443.

SPONSOR PUBLISHED story writer to complete first novel? HSBC, S/C: 40-37-01. A/C: 51149555. Thanks!

LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY for drama student to train at Aada, NY: $30,000 p.a. / 3 years. Angel needed. Tel: 07969 296 135 or S/C: 20-84-41. A/C: 30354597.

YOUNG TEACHER desperate to move out of home before parents kick me out. Classical music collector already in process of selling up collection which is one true love. Any donations would be gratefully accepted. S/C: 01-09-48. A/C-19785739.

SINGLE FATHER with disabled son faces bankruptcy and eviction from our home. Please help. Abbey, A/C: 09-01-26. A/C: 73025358.

BRUTAL HUMAN RIGHTS violations: Healthy individuals now total wrecks, cash urgently needed. Nationwide, S/C: 07-00-30. A/C: 73638178.

I COULDN'T half do with seventeen quid or even a tenner or ANYTHING. Charles Welton, Hull Temple of Bastet, 16 Dover Street, Stonking Upon Hull HU3 1PS.

FIRST-CLASS, comprehensive-educated graduate. Needs £12,000 for Cambridge postgraduate place. HSBC, S/C: 40-43-36. A/C: 91792571. campostgradhelp@gmail.com

PLAYED SANTA TOO LONG: £40k debts, low income. Undeserving but truly grateful. S/C: 40-47-46. A/C: 01061038.

Eye Services

DEBTS RECOVERED / PEOPLE FOUND. No trace, no fee. Former police detective, LLB (Hons) www.debtrecoveryuk.biz Phone 0870 888 8001.

TRACE DEBTORS and missing persons: £99. 'No Trace No Fee'. Telephone: 0800 197 9822 or info@protrace.co.uk

STOP SMOKING NOW! Success rate 94%. Tel: 020 7686 1200. www.tranceworks.co.uk

CREDITORS THREATENING? Avoid bankruptcy / IVA: Confidential, discreet debt solutions. Call 0800 970 0750.

HAVE A GREAT STORY TO TELL? Go to itsonthegrapevine.com

LINK INVESTIGATIONS: Private Investigators, Researchers, Genealogists. Tel: 01342 719 361. Fax: 01342 719 641. Email: info@linkinvestigations.co.uk Website: www.linkinvestigations.co.uk

HAVE YOU BEEN LET DOWN BY YOUR SOLICITORS OR DOES YOUR SOLICITOR LACK THAT CUTTING EDGE? Jamil Ahmud & Co., the lawyers that make a difference. www.ja-solicitors.com Tel: 020 8886 1111 or enquiries@ja-solicitors.com

COMMISSION a personal history file of your (senior) relative, to be kept for prosperity. Word of Mouth Films: 01902 576 718.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS: Complete investigation service. Call 0800 197 9822 or email info@lasker.co.uk

VAT PROBLEMS? Taxman on your case? Speak to Eamon McNicholas. www.EamonMcNicholas.com

WRITE WITH CONFIDENCE. Words are a tool – screw your competitors with dynamic prose. Online courses with established writer. www.worddoctor.co.uk

DOTCOM START-UP requires enthusiastic person, preferably with experience in TV, film or commercial property, to join a small team based in N1. The right person will be generously incentivised with shares in the company. Contact: miranda@production-space.com

YES, YOU CAN NOW COME direct to a barrister. Tel: 020 7833 9625.

Eye Contact

MENNA MATURE mixed oriental visiting massage. Professional service. Tel: 07837 560 761.

LOVING LINKS. UK's leading discreet adult dating service since 1994. Unique top level one-to-one matching service and fast online email system. Call David for a chat on 08456 440 919.

ARE YOU REALLY STRESSED and need gentle unwinding? If so call me with your most relaxing ideas? Phone: 07968 460 852.

RUSSIAN LADIES, attractive and sincere, seek relationship / marriage. Meet many Russian ladies in Britain. Unlimited introductions. Excellent success rate. IFM 01708 478697. www.intromoscow.co.uk

ADDITIONS. A 'loving', adult newsletter: an understanding service for lovers. Tel: 020 8905 3304 or 020 8958 9657. View online.

TAMARA: professional, mature, Malaysian visiting massage. Tel: 07930 386 378.

A TEAM OF qualified masseuses offer a genuine, relaxing and uplifting massage. Tel: 020 7706 2318 or 07789 824 854. www.exoticmassage.co.uk

LONESOME OXBRIDGE BLUES? Why not meet somebody new at www.BluesMatch.com

MEET ORIENTAL LADIES in London / South East. Tel: 01483 284 123 or www.jasminintroductions.com

LONDON LAWYER (54) seeks tactile lady for fun and friendship. Contact malcolmgsw@msn.com

FIT, BLUE-EYED professional man, 37, would like to meet like-minded lady for discreet fun. worldsmylobster@hotmail.co.uk

EXOTIC FEMALE seeks generous sugar daddy (50+) to spoil and pamper me. Reply Box 163443.

WERE YOU Laurence Olivier's dresser? Graham Greene's press agent? Peter Sellers' secretary? We are making a short series about people who have been closely associated with a renowned creative artist at a significant time in their career. The programmes are not concerned with any sordid revelations. Are you one of these people? Please send brief details and contact number by email to ellesdawn@aol.com

UKRAINIAN AND RUSSIAN ladies of all ages are seeking honest and sincere British men. All genuinely looking for love and happiness. www.european-brides.com

MEN WANTED! Speed dating for grown-ups (over 35), May 16 at stylish London venue. Complimentary bar and unlimited champagne! www.kcdating.co.uk Tel: 01728 635 064 or 07986 213 120 (ladies fully booked).

EARTHY MALE, good looking, youthful, slim, 30 something, needs earthy female for passionate discussions about art, literature and science! notjust121@hotmail.com

To place your classified ad call Damien Weafer on 020 7240 9129

YOUR MISSION: EXPERIENCE A BOSE PRODUCT DEMONSTRATION FOR A CHANCE TO WIN AN AMAZING HOLIDAY ACROSS THREE COUNTRIES

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE III

IN CINEMAS 4 MAY 2006

Home cinema from only two speakers? Absolutely possible!

Setting up a 3·2·1 GS DVD home entertainment system takes about 15 minutes. And when you're finished, you'll see only three pieces of equipment: Two small Gemstone™ speaker arrays, and the media centre with integrated DVD/CD player and Am/Fm tuner with RDS. The Acoustimass® module can be hidden out of sight. Pop in a DVD and what you'll hear almost defies belief: a cinema-like sound experience without the use of rear and centre speakers.

See it. Hear it. Visit an authorised Bose dealer near you and ask for a demonstration of a 3·2·1 or a LifeStyle® DVD home entertainment system.

For dealer addresses or more information call 0800 317533 or go to our website www.bose.co.uk

Simply visit your nearest authorised Bose dealer, ask for a demonstration of the 3·2·1 or LIfeStyle® home entertainment system, fill in a draw card and you'll be entered in the draw for the chance to win a 9-day holiday taking you to Berlin, Rome and Los Angeles or one of the runners up prizes.*

*Entry form to be completed after demonstration in store. Second prize: two sports camcorders. Third prize: 25 Mission Impossible merchandise packs. **Buy a 3·2·1 II, 321 GS II or 321 GSX and receive a voucher worth £250 to spend on anything you like in store. Offer self destructs June 30th. See in store for more details.

BOSE®
Better sound through research®

united international pictures

MissionImpossible.com uip.co.uk

Copyright © 2005 by Paramount Pictures All Rights Reserved.

we see

computing made safer and more secure.

At Microsoft® we recognise our responsibility to help you maintain your privacy and security online. That's why, as part of our commitment, we're proud to be a sponsor of Get Safe Online. In conjunction with HM Government, the National Hi-Tech Crime Unit and nine other leading businesses we're working to provide expert advice to help individuals and businesses Get Safe Online. Find out more about the initiative and other developments at microsoft.com/uk/potential

9 770032 888112 19>

Your potential. Our passion.

Microsoft